

PROCEEDINGS

of the twelfth

**Conference on Mennonite
Educational and Cultural
Problems**



Held at

**Mennonite Biblical Seminary
3003 Benham Avenue
Elkhart, Indiana**

June 16-17, 1959

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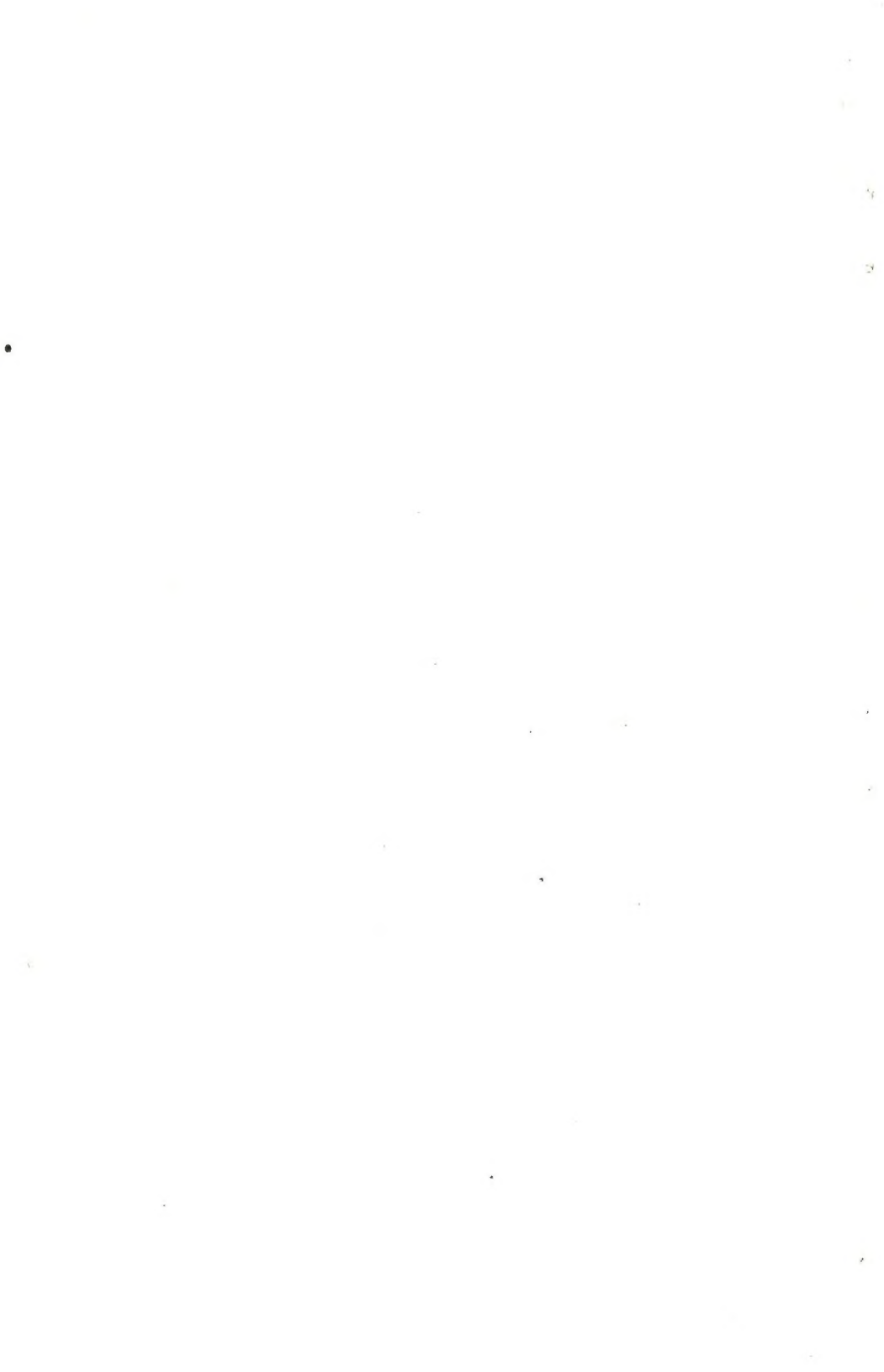
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Bluffton College
Eastern Mennonite College
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Messiah Bible College
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FOREWORD

The twelfth Mennonite Educational and Cultural Problems Conference was held at the Mennonite Biblical Seminary at Elkhart, Indiana. In this conference contrary to some previous sessions there was no single theme on which papers were prepared. The first two papers arranged by the Council of Mennonite and Affiliated Colleges dealt with significant contemporary problems. Paul Bender provided a helpful evaluation of the Mennonite College European Student Program which has been in operation for thirteen years. The paper and ensuing discussion resulted in valuable suggestions regarding the direction this program should take in the future.

In the second paper, Dr. Atlee Beachy presented a frame of reference for student counseling. Up to this point Mennonite colleges have devoted comparatively little attention to this important aspect of human relations. Beachy was well qualified to discuss this subject in view of his recent doctoral dissertation on this subject.

The papers of the Cultural Conference session proper dealt with a series of historical and contemporary Anabaptist Mennonite problems. Henry Poettcker analyzed the hermeneutical approach of Menno Simons to the Scriptures. William Klassen plowed new ground when he discussed the relation of the old and new covenants as held by Pilgram Marpeck, one of the sixteenth century Anabaptist fathers. Irvin Horst interestingly discussed a new approach to the Anabaptist influence on American religious thought. The scope of the paper and the approach taken by Dr. Horst is one comparatively new for Anabaptist Mennonite scholars in treating their heritage and religious faith.

The final papers dealt with contemporary problems. Dr. J. Lawrence Burkholder discussed the social implications of Mennonite doctrines in a new and challenging way; while Dr. J. D. Graber, a long-time missionary and now Executive Secretary of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, discussed policies and problems of intercultural relations of Mennonites on the mission field.

These papers provide an excellent contribution to the existing knowledge pertaining to Mennonite social and religious thought. It is hoped that colleges and research students will find these stimulating and fruitful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	page
Foreword	5
Conference addresses:	
Evaluation Study of the Mennonite College European Student Program, <i>Paul Bender</i>	9
A Conceptual Framework for Counseling, <i>Atlee Beachy</i>	27
Menno Simons' Hermeneutical Approach to the Scripture, <i>Henry Poettcker</i>	41
The Relation of the Old and New Covenants in Pilgram Marpeck's Theology, <i>William Klassen</i>	61
The Anabaptist Influence on American Religious Thought, <i>Irvin B. Horst</i>	77
Social Implications of Mennonite Doctrines, <i>J. Lawrence Burkholder</i>	91
Policies and Problems of Intercultural Relations of Mennonites on the Mission Field, <i>J. D. Graber</i>	113

EVALUATION STUDY OF THE MENNONITE COLLEGE EUROPEAN STUDENT PROGRAM

Paul Bender

Beginning in 1946, the Council of Mennonite and Affiliated Colleges, composed of the presidents of nine colleges and one seminary in the United States (see Table I), undertook the cooperative selection of students in Europe for attendance at these schools. European students have been brought to these schools each year since 1946. Over the ten-year period covered by this study, namely 1946 to 1956, a total of 183 students from Europe attended the Mennonite colleges. During the past three years, from 1956 to 1959, an additional 40 students have come to these schools from Europe.

The selection of students in Europe has been done by a committee of Mennonite Central Committee representatives stationed in Europe. Most of the students have been European Mennonites, and the rest were young people with some connection with European Mennonites or with the work of the Mennonite Central Committee in Europe.

In addition to making available to European young people an educational experience in American colleges, the purposes of the program include an interaction between European and American Mennonites. The American experience of these students can also have an important outcome of international understanding.

Since the inauguration of this European student program, the Mennonite colleges have extended their foreign student programs to include also students from other parts of the world. The present study is limited, however, to the students from Europe.

The Mennonite Central Committee is involved in two separate Exchange Visitor programs for bringing young people to the United States. One is the student program which is the subject of this discussion, in which the Mennonite Central Committee serves merely as the agent of the Mennonite colleges. The second is the Farm Trainee program, carried on directly by the Mennonite Central Committee, which brings European Mennonite young people to American Mennonite homes and communities for a year's work experience. During a two-year assignment in Europe under the Mennonite Central Committee, the author was asked to make an evaluation study of these two Exchange Visitor programs.

The purpose of this study was to try to determine the influence

of the Exchange Visitor experience on the people who participated and on the people and communities in contact with the program. This was with a view to determining whether or not the programs should be continued, and, if so, what improvements might be made in them. The procedure was to send to each participant a questionnaire, similar but different for the two programs. The responses to these questionnaires were tabulated. In addition, the author made personal visits to as many participants as he could in connection with his other work. He also visited ministers and church leaders in representative communities from which members of the exchange programs had come. The present discussion reports only the study of the student program.

RETURNS FROM QUESTIONNAIRES

It was necessary to rely on the colleges for the names and addresses of the European students who had attended each of the colleges. In some cases the current addresses of these students were not known. This address information was supplemented from various European sources as much as possible. Of the total of 183 students the addresses were not known for 29.

Eighty-three students filled out and returned their questionnaires. Thirteen personal contacts with students who did not fill out the questionnaires brings the total contacts with the students to 96, which is over fifty percent of all the students involved.

Table II shows the numbers of students and numbers of returned questionnaires from each of the countries in which the students lived at the time of going to America. There has been a fairly good balance of coverage of returns from the various countries.

Table III shows information similar to the above for students according to college attended. There has been fairly good coverage of the students from the various colleges. Twelve of the twenty-two students who attended Bluffton College could not be reached because their addresses were not known.

Table IV similarly shows distribution for the various years in which the students were in America. The earliest years of the program show the poorest returns.

For the 83 returned questionnaires the more objective responses to questions were tabulated. The following comments point out some of the more significant facts revealed by this tabulation.

Most of the students had completed the regular "gymnasium" or secondary school education before coming to America. A few had had additional training in a university. The students, for the most part, spent only one year in America. From the in-

formation available from the questionnaires, 47 spent one year, 14 two years, and four spent four or more years in America. Twenty students reported having received the Certificate of American Studies. Ten students received a two-year or Associate in Arts degree from the college. Sixteen students received a regular four-year Bachelor's degree. Three students received a Theology degree. Eight students reported that they had attended a second school in America before returning to Europe. Fifty-five students reported that they had attended school further in Europe after returning home.

Seventy-three of the 83 received some financial help from the college. Thirty-six received financial help for travel from government sources, such as the Fulbright Travel Grant. Nearly all the students also worked to earn money while they were students.

Most of the students reported having participated in extra-curricular activities on the campus, with most frequent mention going to religious activities. Literary and club activities follow next, with music as a close third. Sports and international club activities were less frequently mentioned. Social, peace, and service activities were given small mention.

Practically all the students visited other Mennonite colleges as well as Mennonite homes and communities.

Seventy-one students mentioned having spoken to church groups, 56 to civic groups, and 25 to groups on campus.

Only one student indicated that he had not done additional travel while in America. Many of the students did extensive travel in America, either visiting college friends or, more commonly, doing sightseeing to various parts of the country.

In reporting on their experiences since returning to Europe, the employment most frequently mentioned was further study. Twenty had been students again on returning to Europe. Seventeen were teachers, 10 were doing religious work and secretarial work and 10 professional work. Additional occupations were mentioned less frequently. Activities in church life were mentioned 46 times and in student organizations 13 times, whereas civic activities received 7 mentions and international interest activities received 4 mentions. Forty-nine mentioned speaking to church groups and 33 to civic groups.

On reporting their experiences in America the students gave rather free answers to a number of leading questions. First of these was asking them why they wanted to go to America as students. The answers revealed the general purposes of the program, namely, that of giving the students the opportunity of learning to know America and American Mennonites. According to the answers, the first reason was to learn to know America with 42 mentions of this reason. Forty-one gave the second

reason, to learn to known American Mennonites.

In answer to the question as to what were their educational goals, 25 stated that these were general. Twenty-four stated that they wished to learn the English language, and 10 mentioned preparation for religious work. Eight mentioned international understanding as their educational goal. Others mentioned more specific professional goals.

The answer to the question as to whether or not the Student Exchange Program should continue was a unanimous "yes." Three of the 83 questionnaires did not have answers to this question. Many of the positive answers to this question were given in very strong terms.

Table V shows the numbers of these former students who have since emigrated, so far as information is available. Thirty-four have emigrated, and from 10 of these we have received questionnaires. The country from which these students have emigrated in the largest proportion is Italy. Seven of the 10 students from Italy no longer live in Italy. Emigration has been to the United States and Canada, so far as we have information.

The latter part of the questionnaire asked the student to write out, in answer to some rather specific questions, his own statement of the values that he gained from the American experience, and also his own recommendations for the continuation of the program. Pertinent statements from each of the questionnaires have been analyzed. Pertinent remarks have been counted and tables have been made indicating the numbers of times that various points were mentioned. Table VI is a compilation of the statements regarding the values of the program mentioned in the questionnaire.

The students were free in expressing themselves regarding the positive values received from their American experience. It is interesting to note that the development of international understanding has received very high mention in these answers. It seems that the students were conscious of international tensions, particularly immediately following the war, and that their American experience served in very strong ways to overcome these tensions and to develop a feeling of understanding between the nations. A development of understanding of the American Mennonites comes second in the number of times mentioned. To these one should add that the development of understanding of America or of American people has also received a rather high mention. This latter linked with the first statement regarding the development of international understanding indicates something of the strong interest these people have in a general understanding between the peoples of Europe and America.

Personal development also received rather high mention, with both a general personal development and a development in personal religious understanding and experience being mentioned rather frequently. There is also mentioned, although less frequently, the fact that their American experiences helped them to appreciate their home church. Other mention of religious aspects included the development of pacifist views, learning practical Christianity or Christian fellowship, and a challenge in Christian thinking. Direct formal educational values were not so frequently mentioned, but were included in some cases.

Mention of several specific cases of positive benefit from the program will serve to highlight the values gained.

From one German Mennonite community several young people had participated in the exchange program, and each had experienced the freedom of participation in church activities by American Mennonite young people. As a result they promoted, in their home Mennonite church, youth group activities shared by all young people irrespective of any formal or theological preparation for church work.

A pastor of a rather small and scattered Mennonite church commented that the experience of young people from his church in seeing the larger Mennonite brotherhood helped them to an appreciation of their own Mennonite membership and made them more satisfied and useful members of his church.

An Italian Waldensian, who had been active during the war in the underground resistance movement, came to America immediately after the war. During his student experience in a Mennonite college he was active in informal student discussions and in airing and expressing his own thinking. His fellow American students and his professors thought they had made little impact on him. However, as he reported later, he had been much impressed with what he called the sense of Christian vocation which he found in the American Mennonite college situation, and this changed the future course of his life. Upon return to Italy he took a Christian pacifist stand, refusing military service. He escaped what might have become a life-long imprisonment, not by his legal rights, nor by accepting the privilege to request exemption on the basis of earlier military service, but only by the government's reluctance to prosecute him. He gave up the study of law and completed a theological study in order to take up full-time service as secretary of the Agape movement among his Waldensian brethren, a group devoted to service in the spirit of Christian love and operating a well-known international discussion center.

A German Mennonite young man spent a year soon after the

war in an American Mennonite college. He is now an active and aggressive leader, serving as a minister and in many positions of leadership in the life of the German Mennonite church. He reported that his American experience had served to deepen his Christian insight and to broaden his vision, preparing him for making the contribution he is now making in the life of the church. Without his American experience the contribution he is now making would not have been possible.

Numbers of persons commented how that their personal animosities for people of other nations, engendered in the war time tensions, were lost through their American experience. One person remarked that he had had hatred for Americans, and people of other nations, but that through his personal acquaintance and friendship with individual Americans he had lost all such feelings of hatred and would not again be able to hate any people because they are of another nationality.

Negative results from the experience were much less frequently mentioned than were positive results. Most of the negative remarks take the form of criticism of American attitude toward the European students or toward the European situation. One might raise the question as to whether the persons who responded to the questionnaires tended to refrain from giving negative comments. One should probably give more weight to the negative responses than the numbers indicate, although the disparity here is probably not very large. More comment will be made on this later.

One question was a request to make recommendations for the future of the program. In these comments, a workable knowledge of the English language was given most frequent mention. The fact that he should have broad interests was very often mentioned. Along with this are related things such as open-mindedness, international outlook, good representation of home country, mature thinking, adaptability and other general characteristics.

Emphasis was placed on the proper choice of college for each particular person. This point was given frequent and rather strong mention by the persons answering the questionnaires. Along with this statement comes the request for more complete information about the college or colleges to be placed into the hands of the applicants.

The financial problem remains a very real problem for the European student who wishes to study in the United States. Rather thoughtful comments have been made on points relating to the financial aspect of the program.

Another notable thing in these answers is that the student is much concerned about having the opportunity to visit and

get acquainted with Americans in general, outside of the college situation. The students are also interested in having considerable freedom of choice as to their program of study on the college campus, with the opportunity to follow their general personal interests. In the total experience, the general experience of learning to know and understand America is thought of as being primary, rather than a definite school program leading to a definite educational goal.

Written reports of individual interviews with church leaders and ministers, as well as with a few students and trainees have been prepared. These reports have not been specifically analyzed with tabulation of results. The content of the interviews, however, has been very valuable and has been given considerable weight in the further comments in this discussion.

On the American side, each of the participating colleges was asked to answer a series of questions regarding their own evaluation of the European Foreign Student Program. The responses received in answer to these questions have been reported, but not statistically tabulated. These are also taken into account in later comments and recommendations.

EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Continuation of the Program

Implied in this study has been the question as to whether or not the program should be continued. The answer to this question is overwhelmingly "yes," both from the viewpoint of the former students and also from the viewpoint of the church leaders in Europe. The answer is also "yes" from the viewpoint of the colleges, which consider the program of considerable value on their college campuses for the benefit of the American student.

Values and Criticisms

Everyone involved recognizes that there are definite difficulties in such an exchange program. The difficulties involve primarily the adjustments that need to be made by persons going from one culture to another. It is important that these difficulties be kept in mind and be minimized as much as possible. It is not desirable, however, that they be removed entirely, even if this were possible, since the overcoming of these difficulties is a very important part of the experience of these students. Certain of the adjustment difficulties, however, will require special attention and will be considered later. The values gained from the Student Exchange experience far outweigh the difficulties involved in gaining these values. The experience usually results in an important personal development on the part of the participant. It produces a broadening of outlook, both from the viewpoint of the national and international scene and also from the viewpoint

of the religious understanding and experience of the person. This new outlook has often proved to be determinative in the ensuing life and thinking of the person involved. It has also often served to bring this person into a life work of service in his home church and community that would not have been possible without the experience.

There is also the broader aspect of the effect that this experience has on the community from which this person comes and in which he later lives and works. The positive aspects of this impact include an increase in international understanding and good will, and also an increase in understanding between Mennonites and in the Christian fellowship that these Mennonite relationships involve. There is also the impact that a broadened outlook and vision produces through the life work that they carry on in their home communities. In this way many former students are making a positive contribution both in the general community and in the Mennonite church life.

Special mention of some of the criticisms of the program will be of value. The choice of persons for undertaking this exchange experience needs to be done very carefully. The individual should be mature, stable, and a good representative of his home country or of his home church. The significance of his connection with his home church will vary somewhat depending upon the European situation from which he comes. In some cases persons who were interested in going to America were themselves not satisfied or in some way were misfits in their home situations. Such persons are rather poor representatives of their home communities, and are also less likely to succeed in their American experience.

The choice of college for a particular student has come in for considerable criticism. In some cases the student did not know the nature of the college program at the college to which he was sent and found that it was not well suited to his educational level or need. For example, students who had had more advanced training were sometimes sent to junior colleges. Also, students who were looking for specific courses of study were sent into small schools where such courses were not at all available.

A more common criticism of the choice of college has had to do with the nature of the religious program at the college. The adjustment between the religious life of most of these people from their European background to the religious life on the Mennonite college campus is quite difficult in many cases. Students who had come from a more formal and dignified religious life at home found it difficult to accept the very free and open religious attitude of the students on the college campus. They found these students often rather narrow and shallow in their own

religious thinking. In addition to this, when the American students considered their foreign fellows to be sub-Christian or the object of evangelization, the difficulty often became rather severe. In most cases the students came through with a good adjustment of understanding and accepting, although not approving, the religious atmosphere which they found. In other cases the difficulty was not resolved. It is the author's impression that sometimes the difficulties were not known or understood on the college campus.

One must say on the contrary that oftentimes there was a great deal of religious benefit to these people through their experience. The greater emphasis on Christian community, on discipleship, and on such matters as Christian service as found among the American Mennonites, has proved to be of considerable stimulation to many of the European Mennonites. The broader outlook which this experience has made possible has also been of great value to many of these young people. There are cases, however, where the experience seems to have been religiously detrimental rather than beneficial, although these are rather few.

The problem of emigration of these students has come in for a great deal of criticism. It is correct that it is not the purpose of the program to promote emigration of those who participate. One must recognize, however, that there has been considerable emigration pressure from the various countries in Europe, particularly for going to America, and also particularly after World War II when the European situation was rather difficult. There are many other people besides these exchange persons who emigrate to America. Even in cases in which the exchange experience becomes a deciding factor in helping the person to emigrate, the fact of emigration need not always be looked upon as being undesirable. If the individual finds his life outlet in this way, and it is not possible for him to do so at home, then one must consider that the move may be a good one.

However, since one of the main objectives of the Student Exchange Program is to make an impact of international understanding and influence, then this purpose will be frustrated when the individuals leave their home countries and communities. It is important to keep this fact in mind and to exclude those persons from the program who are interested in emigrating before they undertake the exchange experience.

The comments made by those persons who have emigrated reveals rather sincere attitudes on their part regarding the reasons for their emigration. For example, out of the 10 students from Italy who attended the Mennonite colleges in the early years following the war, at least seven have gone to live in other coun-

tries. These were Waldensian students coming from a very poor economic background, not only from a national viewpoint, but particularly from the local viewpoint amongst the Waldensian people. When these rather talented young men found a professional outlet, they discovered that even though they wished to live and work at home it was practically impossible for them to give expression to their aspirations and to make a place for their families if they remained at home. A number of these who are now living in the United States still have the desire to return home and to use their skills with their own people. It is to be regretted that the program has had less impact on the home communities than would have been desired. However, the rather notable and worthwhile achievements of these individuals in their new situations are also of considerable value.

Recommendations

Selection of students on the European side should be done with considerably more care than has been possible previously. This will involve more effort on the part of those administering the program.

In the first place, it should be kept in mind that the European situation has changed considerably since the early years of the program, immediately after World War II. At that time a good foreign outlet for European students was quite desirable. There were therefore many candidates for these places who could well profit from the experience, which became an opportunity to secure a new outlook after the rather severe circumstances of war-time Europe. The situation in Europe is now considerably stabilized, and this extreme urgency for foreign experience on the part of young people no longer exists. However, the basic needs for international understanding and for international Mennonite contact continue, and the fundamental criteria for the choice of persons for this experience should be centered around their needs. Of course, one must consider also the many personal advantages that the experience will have for the participants.

Selection of candidates for the student exchange should be done more on the basis of selection and recommendation by church leaders and former students, and less on the basis of advertising for those who might wish to undertake this experience. This would involve more active participation on the part of ministers and others concerned with the program. The selection has usually been carried out on the basis of recommendation from the local minister, but in many cases his participation in the selection has been passive rather than active. It may be difficult to induce active participation in selection on the part of some of the leaders, but the effort should be made to bring the selec-

tion procedure more into that method. One way to accomplish this purpose would be to require that the student's application to the European Selection Committee be made through his local pastor.

In certain European Mennonite circles it is desired that the future church leaders should have American experience as part of their education. This is for the sake of the broadening of their outlook and of the understanding of the wider Mennonite situation. In such cases Mennonite leadership should promote the exchange of these prospective leaders and ministers. I think it is well that the European Selection Committee should foster such relationships and should honor the interest of these people in having young persons have an American experience. Full implementation of this principle will involve also financial aspects which need to be considered from the American side.

The proper choice of the college to which to send a particular person is of considerable significance. Two aspects of this choice which need special consideration are the type of college program available to the student and also the type of religious life to be found on the college campus. The recommendation of a particular person for a particular college will necessarily need to be made largely by the European Selection Committee. This means that this committee must have a rather thorough knowledge of these colleges and also must become fairly well acquainted with the qualifications and requirements of the individual applicants.

The colleges can improve the program of orientation for the foreign students. In the first place, the information that the students receive from the colleges has been much too meager. The student applicant should be given some opportunity to become acquainted with the various colleges so that he can have at least an intelligent response to the choice which is made for him. This would involve making available information regarding the type of program at the college as well as other general information about the college. Each individual college would do well to be careful to send necessary information either directly to the applicants or to the European Selection Committee who can pass on the information to the applicants. After the choice is made of a particular applicant for a particular college, the college will do well to inform the student further as to the nature of the program and the nature of the requirements for the applicant. He will wish to know what will be expected of him, both as to the things he should bring with him and also as to the attitudes that the college will expect. The financial arrangements for the student's attendance at the college should be very clearly set out.

Orientation of the student upon arrival on the campus is also very significant. Among the important things mentioned here is the choice of some companion to help this newcomer to make his adjustments to the very strange circumstances in which he finds himself. He will want to get acquainted with the campus and with the customs of student life. He will want to be included in the normal social life of the campus and not only with a group of other foreign students. He will also want to get acquainted with the off-campus American life.

Another aspect might well be some sort of orientation of the American student body regarding these foreign students. Proper choice of such key persons as roommates for foreign students will do a great deal to help the situation. For further orientation of the general student body, this will probably need to be done indirectly through such things as the student publications and student organizations. American students should be encouraged to take active interest in these foreign students and their home problems and situations. The American students should also be encouraged to include the foreign students in their various activities, including such things as inviting them into their homes. One of the interests of foreign students is to get acquainted with America and American ways and it can better be accomplished through such personal contacts than through a life limited to the college campus.

The rather keen interest of most of these students in the American situation leads them to desire such other outside contacts as going on class field trips and visiting various aspects of the American economy. They are also much interested in freedom of motion so that they can do some traveling and follow some of their own interests in learning to understand America.

These students are also interested in some freedom of choice of courses to study while they are on the college campus. For the most part they cannot use the American credit formally when they return to Europe. Therefore their program should permit courses in their general interest and courses that will help them to get acquainted with the American scene. For the most part it should be possible for European students to choose upper-level college courses. The completion of the "gymnasium" course in Europe is academically stronger than the completion of the American high school. Such students should probably not be classified as freshmen and should be given some freedom of choice of program that takes into account their more thorough scholastic schooling on the European side. In all these matters the students desire, and should have, very careful counseling by faculty advisers who can help to interpret to them the American

school program and the courses that they would choose. These faculty counselors should have some acquaintance with the European educational system, and enough acquaintance with the general European situation to enter sympathetically into the student's problems.

The financial aspect of the program seems to be in need of considerable study. If the basic purpose of the program is to be provision for an American experience for particular persons in Europe who can most profit from it and make the most contribution to their home situation, then it will be necessary to have a financial program that will make it possible for these persons to undertake this experience. The program should be such that the financial ability of the student to pay should not be the deciding factor as to whether he undertakes this experience. With the European economy as it is, this will mean that provision for practically the full financing of the year spent in America will need to be made in one way or another.

On the European side it would be highly desirable if some assurance could be given that students who are seriously recommended from the Mennonite leadership on the basis of their suitability for the international Mennonite exchange would have the necessary financial resources made available to them to make this experience possible. In this way the best persons for undertaking this program could be chosen.

It is not the desire of the European student, nor of the leaders recommending him, that he should receive this experience without any cost to himself. Various recommendations have been made, including the recommendation that the European student be required to pay an amount equivalent to what a year's study in Europe would cost him. This is a relatively small amount compared to what the American education would cost, but on the other hand, it is an amount that is usually fairly difficult for the European student to meet.

It would seem necessary therefore that the full expenses for the student's year in America be guaranteed in some way, including travel, living and tuition costs. The amount actually received by the student would then be reduced by the payments which he could make from the European side. Travel costs in the past have in some cases been met by government sources such as the Fulbright Travel Grant from the United States State Department. However, very few Mennonite college exchange students would normally be successful in being chosen for these travel grants. In cases where the grants are available, they should certainly be obtained. It is not realistic, however, to count strongly on a large proportion of the Mennonite students secur-

ing these government grants.

It would seem desirable to have all the Mennonite colleges agree on a common program of financing these European students. It is particularly undesirable to have the various colleges offer widely varying amounts of financial aid so that the choice of college for the student becomes a financial matter rather than a matter of college program and spirit. Since each of the colleges has difficulty in financing such a program, it would seem desirable if some common fund could be established for carrying out this program. Perhaps some sources of money could be found for financing an international Mennonite interaction through the student exchange program, and this money used to finance these European Mennonite students at the various Mennonite colleges.

EVALUATION STUDY OF THE MENNONITE COLLEGE EUROPEAN STUDENT PROGRAM

Table I—Mennonite and Affiliated Colleges

Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas—General Conference Mennonite
Bluffton College, Bluffton, Ohio—General Conference Mennonite
Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, Virginia—"Old" Mennonite
Freeman Junior College, Freeman, South Dakota—General Conference Mennonite
Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana—"Old" Mennonite
Hesston College, Hesston, Kansas—"Old" Mennonite
Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Chicago, Illinois (now Elkhart, Indiana)—General Conference Mennonite
Messiah College, Grantham, Pennsylvania—Brethren in Christ
Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kansas—Mennonite Brethren
Upland College, Upland, California—Brethren in Christ

Table II—Students by Country of Origin

Country	Total Students	Returned Questionnaires	Additional Interviews	Address Unknown
Germany	96	55	5	5
Holland	51	17	6	13
France	16	5	1	3
Switzerland	5	2	0	0
Italy	10	3	1	5
Belgium	3	1	0	1
Greece	2	0	0	2
Totals	183	83	13	29

Table III—Students by Mennonite College first Attended

College	Total Students	Returned Questionnaires	Additional Interviews	Address Unknown
Bethel	28	15	3	3
Bluffton	22	7	0	12
E. M. C.	14	8	1	2
Freeman	13	9	0	0
Goshen	50	19	6	8
Hesston	8	3	1	1
Menn. Bib. Sem.	4	1	1	0
Messiah	14	8	1	2
Tabor	20	10	0	1
Upland	3	3	0	0
College not known	7	0	0	0
Totals	183	83	13	29

Table IV—Students by Year of First Attendance at a Mennonite College

Year	Total Students	Returned Questionnaires	Additional Interviews	Address Unknown
1946-47	18	6	3	2
1947-48	14	4	0	7
1948-49	26	10	4	5
1949-50	24	13	2	1
1950-51	24	10	1	3
1951-52	12	5	1	2
1952-53	11	7	0	2
1953-54	13	9	0	1
1954-55	12	12	0	0
1955-56	14	7	1	4
year not known	15	0	1	2
Totals	183	83	13	29

Table V—Emigrated

Country of Origin	Known emigrees among total students	Emigrees among those answering questionnaire
Germany	16	5
Holland	7	2
France	2	0
Switzerland	0	0
Italy	7	2
Belgium	1	1
Greece	1	0
Totals	34	10
country to which emigrated		
U. S. A.	27	
Canada	5	
Unknown	2	
Total	34	

Table VI—Values of the Program as Mentioned in Answers to Questionnaires (numbers designate frequency of mention)

1. Positive values gained from the American experience
 - 41 development of international understanding
 - 30 development of understanding of American Mennonites
 - 29 general personal development
 - 29 development in personal religious understanding and experience
 - 24 development of understanding of America or American people
 - 12 growth in appreciation of the home church
 - 10 development of international Mennonite understanding
 - 10 learning English
 - 10 growth in appreciation of the home country
 - 6 development of a wholesome critical attitude to home church
 - 6 development of pacifist views
 - 6 help in later studies
 - 6 help in getting employment
 - 5 removal of prejudice
 - 5 development of personal friendships
 - 5 development of a wholesome critical attitude toward the home country
 - 4 help in clarifying life goals

- 3 help in clarifying educational goals
- 3 learning practical Christianity
- 3 learning Christian fellowship
- 3 development of a broader outlook on life
- 2 development of a sense of responsibility to the home church
- 2 challenge in Christian thinking
- 2 conscious of being a Mennonite
- 1 conversion

Were educational goals achieved?

7 yes

4 no

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR COUNSELING

By Atlee Beachy

Introduction

Counseling is not a new function. The significant interchange between two persons resulting in behavior change is as old as the human race itself. The tremendous increase in interest in the field in recent years, however, is one of the more important developments of the twentieth century. The helping professions appear to be coming into their own and at the heart of all these efforts lies the counseling relationship. A number of disciplines claim parenthood to this popular emerging activity. This has led at times to a type of academic possessiveness frequently expressed by a defensive noncommunication between representatives of the various disciplines. In some instances where there was communication between such representatives, it was largely that of denouncing the approaches, techniques, or assumptions used by the representatives of the different disciplines. Happily today conversations are going on between the psychiatrist, the social worker, the psychologist, the theologian, and other professional personnel working in the field of counseling.

The expanding interest in counseling is due to a number of factors. A growing awareness and concern for modern man's spiritual and psychic condition has stimulated renewed interest in exploring ways to help man. Recent explorations and research in the area of personality, human growth and development, and learning have tended to provide a fertile field from which have developed various theories about the nature of counseling, its techniques, and to a limited extent the philosophical assumptions and foundations on which the counseling process rests. The increased interest in mental health, the growing awareness of the seriousness of the psychic condition of western life, and the apparent increase in the so-called social diseases also have contributed toward the enlarging interest in this field. Interdisciplinary research has become more popular within the current period and this factor may have been influential in contributing toward the growth of interest in this activity. In addition, our materialistic and sensate culture has made possible the emergence of some individuals who see in this area the potential for materialistic gain. Psychological quackery and misguided application of counseling principles has resulted in a major problem in this country. Neither adequate control within the emerging discipline

nor sufficient legal protection has as yet been established to protect people from the inroads of marginal practice by those who see in this area an opportunity to reap financial returns.

The Larger Problem

Although significant conversations are going on between representatives of the various disciplines related to counseling, such conversations remain largely on the preliminary level of exchange. This communication is to be encouraged but to indicate that all is well because such communication is taking place would be an unwarranted conclusion. Some persons tend to minimize the differences in the assumptions made by representatives of the various disciplines and feel that a total marriage of the various disciplines is imminent. Others see such large differences in the basic theological and philosophical assumptions regarding the nature of man, his relationship to the state, his ultimate purpose, the means by which he changes and grows, and the nature of sin and evil that they feel there is little value in conversations between the theologian and the representatives of psychology and psychiatry. Somewhere between the viewpoints expressed by those who feel that the kingdom comes through psychological counseling and those who see in such efforts the very devil working, there must be a legitimate and right road. Certainly one of the most critical problems facing the Christian church, including our own Mennonite Church, is to think through the theological basis of this whole area and to examine the psychological and the sociological implications of both philosophy and methods of counseling. The problem is pictorially represented in the attached figure. How does early religious training, the affectional and the total cultural pattern, the conversion experience, and Christian nurture change the inner self as it moves out? How are these factors related to the psychological process? A beginning certainly has been made in this area, but in reality much work remains to be done. The urgency is considerable and the responsibility must be accepted in a realistic manner. To avoid this responsibility can only lead to a continuing state of confusion and fearfulness about the area or to a gradual acceptance of a secular and humanistic approach to life itself.

This paper is not primarily directed toward an examination of the tension areas between a Christian approach to counseling and a so-called secular approach to this activity. Essentially the writer's doctoral study attempted to briefly review the cultural and psychological condition of modern man; to analyze and sort out the basic underlying principles in the Vocational Guidance, the Child Growth and Development, and the Mental Hygiene movements; to review the Guidance movement in education in this country; and finally out of this analysis and the writer's

own searching select certain foundational ideas underlying modern guidance and counseling. The final step of the larger study was to formulate the basic concepts into a framework. This framework in a sense provides the windows through which the counseling experience may be viewed as well as representing psychological processes through which persons move in their development. The counselor needs to understand these concepts and processes if he is to function effectively. The five basic ideas included in the conceptual framework are: adjustment, individualization, socialization, vocation, and love.

Some Assumptions of the Study

Some of the assumptions of the study are indicated below:

1. Every counselor has a frame of reference. The frame of reference includes the value structure of the individual. The frame of reference is a world view which includes the person's attitude toward God, the nature of man, what man ideally should become, the ultimate purposes of man, the nature of evil and sin, and finally incorporates also his attitude toward the use of the content and procedures which psychological and philosophical study have given him.

2. The counseling frame of reference possessed by the counselor goes with him into the counseling interview. The frame of reference has significance for what occurs in the deep level communication between two persons, whether this frame of reference is acknowledged consciously by the counselor or not. It is also true that the counselee will bring into this exchange a frame of reference.

3. Although the counseling frame of reference of the counselor will show through and will influence what happens in the basic exchange it is recognized that such a touching at deep levels must have at its core respect and integrity which will permit freedom of acceptance, rejection, and inter-exchange. Human personality is the most sacred element of God's whole creation.

4. The individual's framework emerges out of the person's own previous experiences including his spiritual experience and understanding, his emotional development, and his academic and research pursuits.

Definitions and Terms

There has been no unanimity of opinion among educators as to the exact meaning of the following terms and concepts. In this paper they have been used in the context of the definitions outlined below:

Guidance: In the educational setting, guidance is a point of view about students, the curriculum, and the school staff and a planned program of assisting students to learn to know and

to understand themselves, their feelings, abilities, limitations, and to plan intelligently how to fulfill their life space needs in line with this understanding.

Learning: Learning is the process through which the student perceives and makes a part of himself attitudes, ideals, facts, skills, appreciations, and understandings leading to changes in behavior. Learning can take place in the counseling interview as well as in the classroom, in student activities, and in the informal life of the college community.

Counseling: Counseling is a dynamic process involving a face-to-face relationship between two people leading to clarification of goals, greater self-direction, increasing mutuality, and more effective adjustment of the student to himself and to his environment.

Adjustment: Adjustment is the individual's total effort to find meaning, relationship, and reconciliation. It is essentially learned behavior involving skills of various kinds, knowledge and facts about self and the world, and values and goals. An adjustment to inner space needs is essential. Adjustment for the development of individuality rather than conformity is fundamental.

Individualization: Individualization is the process of finding inner personal identity and is a constantly changing psychological state. It is essentially the process of becoming a person. Many factors influence the process with the emerging self-image being a crucial factor.

Socialization: Socialization is the process of finding meaningful relationship and is a constantly changing state of relationship with others. The process recognizes the social nature of the individual and of his need for involvement in others and the involvement of others in his life at a deep level.

Vocation: Vocation means the work activity and the accompanying life pattern of the individual. The selection of meaningful and satisfying work is a process affected by many factors including the developmental pattern of the individual, his interest and ability patterns, his sense of call, and his self-image.

Love: Love is the voluntary and consistent sharing of oneself through understanding and acceptance in the life of another.

Foundational Concepts of Guidance

The search for the essential basic underlying concepts led to a broad examination. Guidance is related to the total situation out of which it has developed. It was therefore necessary to examine the evolving ideological struggle for the control of the minds of

men, the implications of the political, social, and economic changes which have taken place, and man's eternal search for meaning. The drive to find meaning is essentially the drive to become a person and to find relationship. The "becoming process" begins with conception and remains characteristic of man throughout life. In order for this dynamic process to move toward productive experience the individual needs physical, psychological, vocational, and aspirational space. Without perceiving and occupying such space the becoming process is limited and man falls short of his potential. The individual utilizes certain spiritual and psychological processes in becoming a person.

The study also reviewed three significant educational and psychological movements. Two of these, Mental Hygiene and Child Growth and Development, have maintained separate identities to a greater degree than has Vocational Guidance. The latter is recognized as being the major forerunner of the general guidance movement of today.

The study of these movements and the emergence of key ideas out of the historic democratic concepts related to freedom, work, the role of the individual and the state, and an assessment of the deep inner search for meaning in the context of the crosscurrents of societal forces and changes has led to a projection of five foundational concepts. These represent the broad foundations upon which guidance rests.

1. Each individual, by virtue of being created a human being, possesses inestimable worth and because of this fact his dignity and freedom must be accepted and respected.

2. Differences in the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual perceptions exist within the human family and these differences must be understood, appreciated, accepted, and recognized as potential for enrichment of life and as part of the larger basic unity of humanity.

3. Personality develops as a man seeks to become a person, to link himself with ultimate meaning, order and purpose, and to fulfill certain physical, psychological, vocational, and aspirational space needs through learnings which are unique to him in his own particular life-space-time situation.

4. Acceptance and understanding of self and others, and acceptance and understanding by others within a primary fellowship group contributes toward a climate in which creative growth processes within the individual are most effectively released for constructive purposes.

5. Man is a dynamic, developmental organism whose psychological, physiological, emotional, and spiritual aspects are interwoven and interrelated in functioning as a person in a constantly changing environment.

The concepts listed above have their roots in many disciplines. These include psychology, theology, philosophy, sociology, education, biology, and economics. They represent the broad base upon which guidance rests. The different approaches to guidance reflect varying degrees of emphasis on these foundational concepts. Their validity rests primarily upon their historical and philosophical basis and their refinement within the disciplines and to the interdisciplinary psychological and educational research and experimentation of recent years. Final responsibility for the selection and the specific formulation of them belongs to the writer.

A Conceptual Framework

This total review and analysis required further exploration of how these foundational concepts were related to education and to guidance. More specifically, the study led to a search for the crucial concepts needed by the counselor as he assists the student in the "becoming" process of meeting his life-space needs. This search required evaluative judgments regarding the philosophical and psychological orientation necessary for this to occur. The five concepts appearing to the writer to be most significant for this purpose include *adjustment*, *individualization*, *socialization*, *vocation*, and *love*. These five concepts when viewed in their inter-relatedness form the conceptual framework of guidance. These concepts cannot be isolated and placed into rigidly defined areas. Each represents a condition of behavior and a process through which behavior is changed. Their meaning is greater than the sum total of all of them. In a real sense they form a pattern, each affecting the other and each in turn being affected by every other one. In addition they must always be viewed in the context of the individual, a specific individual in a specific situation searching, moving, and becoming.

The concept of adjustment and its relationship to counseling will be briefly reviewed in the next section.

ADJUSTMENT AND THE COUNSELING PROCESS

The term adjustment has been very popular in educational and psychological thought during the past several decades. It has been used to cover a multitude of meanings. The reckless and sometimes ambiguous usage of the concept has led to a real cynicism by many people concerning the validity of the concept. What is the meaning of adjustment? Is adjustment a means or an end in itself? How is the concept related to counseling?

The term adjustment has been used to explain human behavior in certain educational and psychological circles. Man possesses instincts, drives, urges, or needs and his behavior

reflects his attempt to adjust to these forces. Certain of these adjustments take place internally while others were related to an adjustment of or to external conditions. The individual was considered well adjusted to the degree that he was able to satisfy these demands sufficiently that he could function effectively. This general theory, arising in part out of the interpretation of behavioral and psychoanalytic psychology concerning the role and meaning of adjustment, greatly influenced educational practice up to the present time.

Cultural anthropologists and social psychologists have done much to point out the significance of situational and cultural factors in adjustment. Biologically oriented psychologists and geneticists have emphasized the role of genetic endowment and physiological factors, including the chemistry of the body, in adjustment. Psychoanalytically minded individuals have tended to stress the role of the unconscious and deeply embedded factors in adjustment. Child growth and development and mental hygiene representatives have indicated that early adjustment patterns are crucial for later growth and that these are primarily learned within the affectional structure and fabric of the family. Developmental psychologists suggest that discovering, developing, accepting, and following after an appropriate self-image is the essence of adjustment. Vocational guidance counselors are beginning to view vocational adjustment as an important part of the total adjustment of the individual and intimately related to the self-concept of the person.

Guidance people in general have accepted adjustment as a valid goal. The meaning of the concept has, however, varied considerably. In many instances the core meaning has been that of helping the student to passively "fit" into his own situation with a minimum of tension or frustration. Involved in this concept of adjustment was the idea that the counselor's function was that of bringing resources to bear on the external environment so that the pressures on the individual are reduced. In this sense the guidance program functions primarily as a manipulator of forces or circumstances playing on the individual. At the other end of the continuum the counselor sees his primary task as that of helping the individual to understand and accept himself. It is through the process of self-understanding and self-acceptance that the individual strengthens his psychological resources to the point where he can meet the tensions and frustrations of life and deal with them constructively.

Several assumptions are involved in the point of view which emphasizes adjustment primarily as assisting the person to fit into his society. The following assumptions need to be critically examined:

1. Adjusting to the values of the group will be psychologically satisfying.

2. The values of the group have social, ethical, and moral validity and the acceptance of these will have internal validity and meaning for the individual.

3. Tension will be reduced as the areas of conflict between the individual and his environment are diminished.

4. Tensions arising out of not fitting into society are less desirable than tensions arising out of a possible loss of individuality resulting from the surrender of self-determination.

5. Conformity is a high value and man can make his greatest contribution when he fits into his society.

6. Man can be manipulated or adjusted in such a way that he will fit into the prevailing cultural pattern.

7. The state and society are qualified to determine the pattern into which all of its citizens are to fit.

8. Nonconformity is usually disruptive and undesirable.

The concept of adjustment which carries this idea to extreme degrees obviously has limitations. The cry against the "cult of conformity" has arisen from many sources. Philosophically-minded historians have registered anxious concern for the individual and the conditions which contribute toward his effective functioning as a member of a democratic society. Sociologists are raising questions concerning the effects of the "other-directed personality" on the vitality and virility of the productive capacity of man. Psychologists and psychiatrists are giving increasing attention to the nature of man and of his basic need to be a person and to possess room for a creative expression of his ideas and his work. Hobbs, speaking of the question of personal adjustment as a valid guidance goal, stated: "One of the insufficiently examined assumptions in our guidance lore is the easy acceptance of personal adjustment as the desired outcome of counseling."¹

Just as this view of adjustment is inadequate for guidance, so is also the point of view that adjustment is primarily a matter of manipulating external conditions. In the first place such manipulation in many instances is impossible because the control of significant factors is vested in powers beyond the reach of the counselor. This does not mean an indifference to such conditions or a lack of interest in changing disintegrating influences. This point of view, however, recognizes the reality of each self-situation and the framework within which it is necessary to work. In the second place, manipulation of the environment may actually have harmful results and militate against the long-range goals. If the counselor assumes the role of "puller of strings" or "mover of powers" he may actually take away from the student the opportunity to

strengthen and develop his own psychological strength and insight so necessary for his self-respect and self-trust. The temptation of the counselor for satisfying his own emotional needs and to be well thought of may get in the way of recognizing the real nature of the long-range adjustment process. The right of the student to test out his capacity, to stretch his spiritual and psychological powers within an atmosphere of trust in which the student knows that the counselor stands beside him is essential. Important as are environmental factors in the adjustment process and particularly an understanding of them by the student, a concept of adjustment which views the basic job of counseling as that of maneuvering the educational or social environment falls short of adequacy.

Another concept of adjustment less widely held by guidance personnel views adjustment largely as a biological process. The tremendous emphasis on cultural and environmental factors in adjustment during the past decades has tended to overshadow those who in an earlier day explained behavior largely as the efforts of a biological organism to adjust to its basic strivings and needs. A new and intense interest in the effects of physiological factors on adjustment has emerged. The roles of genetic endowment, health, food, disease, drugs, and chemical balance in the body are difficult to isolate and study but nevertheless experimentation in this area is proceeding. Although this increasing interest and attention in this area promises fruitful results it would appear that a concept of adjustment completely oriented biologically would also not be acceptable.

Perhaps one of the most commonly accepted concepts of adjustment is that it is the process resulting from the individual's attempt to meet certain basic needs. Some of these needs arise out of the genetic nature of man and others are culturally determined. The number of such needs, their relative importance, and their classification shows wide variation. Happily the earlier vehement arguments regarding the source of these motivating behavior factors has subsided to some degree and there has evolved some measure of understanding regarding the inter-relatedness of these factors.

In spite of the current controversial discussion and confusion regarding adjustment it is the thesis of this paper that there is a concept of adjustment that possesses validity and one that is an essential part of a conceptual framework for guidance. The concept as projected recognizes that—

1. Adjustment is learned behavior motivated by the desire to be a self-directing individual consistent with his evolving self-image.

2. The individual is always in the state of becoming, reaching

for completeness, for reconciliation, but never fully achieving it, and constantly striving toward wholeness with others and the universe.

3. Self-image, self-understanding, and self-acceptance are significant factors in adjustment. The self-image is learned through the feelings expressed by those closest to the individual through verbal and non-verbal means. It is enlarged through the individual's own experience in exploring his abilities, limitations, feelings, and success and failure experiences, and the nature and depth of his spiritual experience.

4. Physiological factors such as bodily structure, muscle strength, glandular balance, congenital deformities, and mental capacity have significance for adjustment.

5. Although there are defined and consistent patterns of adjustment each individual possesses a pattern which is absolutely unique to him.

6. Conflict and tension are the raw materials of adjustment. They are the forces which motivate the individual to action. All people, and particularly persons deeply committed to a religious faith, will find elements in culture which produce varying degrees of tension. It is when the individual can no longer cope with these tensions effectively that non-integrative adjustment behavior sets in.

7. The adjustment of the individual takes place in a social situation in which other individuals are also engaged in working out their adjustments to themselves and their situations.

8. Adjustment is always a dynamic process. Forces within the individual, in the immediate environment, the interaction between the individual and his environment, the individual's past experiences and his aspirations for the future, the larger cultural structure and values of the society all help determine the individual's adjusting behavior at any single moment.

9. The intellect is an important factor in adjustment. Adjustment skills are learned.

10. Adjustment means finding a relationship of reconciliation and discipleship to the eternal through Jesus Christ and the translation of love into visible terms.

Counseling is becoming increasingly aware that the end goal of adjustment is important. Adjustment to a life pattern which has in it disintegrative forces such as the power of dialectic materialism of communism, a narrow nationalism, or personal selfishness has relevancy. To protect the right of the individual to his freedom of choice is basic but it does not follow that all attitudes toward self and all the world views are similarly valid

and contribute equally to human welfare. It is exactly at this point that guidance has a responsibility to re-examine its underlying assumptions and its commitments. Adjustment to national socialism, if such adjustment meant accommodation in order to avoid tension, is hardly of the desired type. If adjustment meant coming to grips with the reality of the situation and finding an inner platform from which to work at the vicious and disintegrating evil of Nazism then such a concept of adjustment has life and vitality. Adjustment unattached to valid goals is like possessing the latest means of transportation but having no valid travel plan. This has led to a paradox and a neutrality which has kept guidance philosophically on dead center without the necessary dynamic to move forward.

The term universal values has not been a popular one during the past several decades. Perhaps it is time to review the question. Are there certain values that appear to have had a high premium throughout the history of the human race? Are altruistic ideals impractical and out of date? Do history, sociology, theology, and philosophy have anything to say to this question? It is proposed that although there is no agreement on the exact nature of these values there are some values upon which there is some measure of agreement. In the long sweep of history the following appear to be outstanding:

1. Freedom for all people is a desired goal and provides the atmosphere in which man can make his most creative contribution.
2. The spiritual, physical, and psychological welfare of the total human race is important for survival.
3. Love and co-operation among people have contributed to a more satisfying life than hate and selfishness within a nation, between races, and among the nations of the world.
4. Respect for human personality, man's aspirational needs, and the dignity of work are high values for human happiness and productivity.
5. It is in the full development of man's intelligence dedicated to the solving of the problems of all humanity that man finds fulfillment.
6. Man needs an integrating center around which to orient his life.

Counseling has a role in ascertaining what values it considers valid. Adjustment as a process cannot be viewed in isolation but of necessity must be viewed within a framework which is implied or stated. The goal of adjustment is the development of behavior which reflects a personal and world view sympathetically oriented to the above values. Counseling, if it is to be philosophically hon-

est, must clarify the content it is placing in the concept of adjustment.

Adjustment as projected constitutes a key concept in the conceptual framework. It is basically a process and a dynamic state of being and becoming. Perception has crucial importance for learning and learning is the essence of adjustment. Adjustment means more than fitting in. Biological and cultural factors in the specific-time-situation influence the individual's adjustment. Each individual's pattern of adjustment is unique to him, but his efforts to adjust take place in a social situation. The self-awareness and the self-image of the individual are significant factors in adjustment. Conflict and tension are motivating factors in adjustment and become disintegrating in their effects when the individual no longer can effectively cope with them. The use of the intelligence for developing higher level skills of adjustment offers opportunity for fruitful research and study. The resources of the spiritual experience for adjustment are large.

The remaining concepts in the framework, namely; *individualization*, *socialization*, *vocation*, and *love* will not be discussed in this paper.

Conclusion

Adequate professional preparation integrated with a strong religious faith and experience is necessary if the counselor is to be effective. This combination is essential if the counselor sees his role as going beyond communication on the superficial level. A sharp line between the counselor's set of life values and his professional frame of reference cannot be drawn for what a man does in any line of work must be, at least in a measure, consistent with what he is. This does not suggest that the so-called non-Christian counselor cannot provide a quality of relationship and utilize professional skills which will help assist a person with his emotional difficulties, but this position proposes that any counselor—Christian, atheist, nominally Christian—carries with him into the counseling relationship in varying degrees his particular value pattern. This pattern along with the counselee's pattern of values and many other factors are determinants of what goes on in the counseling exchange. Some emotional difficulties have little or no direct relationship to spiritual factors while others are very closely related to such factors particularly when the religious orientation assumes that all of life comes under the Lordship of Christ. Because the lines between these two types of emotional difficulties are not clearly defined and in view of the varying degrees of seriousness of emotional problems questions arise as to whether the psychiatrist, the pastor, the social worker, the psychologist, or the school counselor should be doing the counseling. If the problem is primarily religious then the pastor with adequate

counseling skills would seem to be an appropriate person. An alternate possibility would be that the psychiatrist, the psychologist, the social worker, and the school counselor possessing a world view based in a strong religious faith and experience might also be helpful. This means that such a person must have, however, a meaningful religious faith. Certainly Biblical truth is a primary source of knowledge about man and his behavior and the conversion experience and Christian nurture are crucial factors in changing behavior.

In addition to the above, it is well to remember that the social sciences also have a significant contribution to make in supplying information and understandings regarding the behavior of man. Emil Brunner speaks to this point when he states, "There is a psychology which, at least in part, is not affected by either faith or unbelief, a knowledge of facts about man which the Christian must weave into his picture of man like anyone else."² Psychological and sociological principles operate in changing human behavior. The dynamic way in which these operate in personality must be understood by the counselor. The counselor must remain sensitive to and understanding of the complex and deeply rooted way in which these forces influence the direction of development. Back of all the verbal and non-verbal exchange in the counseling exchange lie two persons with distinctive patterns of feelings and strivings. The words spoken in the interview can only be understood within the spiritual, psychological, and sociological frame of reference from which they emerge.

This paper has focused primarily on one of the psychological concepts of the frame of reference. The conceptual framework is composed of a selected list of basic psychological concepts and processes. The selection and discussion of these concepts has arisen in part out of my inner experience. But the author is a layman in terms of theology even though he believes his own spiritual experience and commitment have been reflected in the discussion. The larger job of beginning with the theological presuppositions and assumptions and moving from these into a realistic evaluation of the contributions of the behavioral sciences to understanding man remains to be done. Such a study involves more than superficially placing a set of psychological principles on top of certain accepted theological assumptions and ideas. Conversely it means more than modifying theological principles to make them fit into psychological concepts. Various inter-disciplinary groups are discussing this problem.

FOOTNOTES

¹Nicholas Hobbs, "The Complete Counselor," *The Personnel and Guidance Journal*, XXXVI, March, 1958.

²Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption*, Vol. II. pp. 46, 47.

MENNO SIMONS' HERMENEUTICAL APPROACH TO THE SCRIPTURE

By Henry Poettcker

Hermeneutics may be defined as that branch of study which seeks for the necessary rules and formulates a system by which all or specific writings may be interpreted. In theology this term is applied to the study of the general principles whereby the meaning of the Sacred Scriptures is ascertained. In the nature of the case it is closely related with both exegesis and criticism, and must actually set forth certain rules regarding the practice of these branches of study. Exegesis, which is the actual interpretation of a particular passage, may adopt several methods of approach, and it remains the task of hermeneutics to determine which method shall be followed in a specific instance.

To understand Menno Simons' hermeneutical approach to the Scripture, we need to see it against the background of the shift to the '*sola scriptura*' principle during the time of the Reformation.

I. THE HISTORIC CONTEXT

When Luther nailed his 95 theses to the church door in Wittenberg, he was concerned about the fact that Scripture come into its own. Two things had become very clear to him: for one, from the many things which he had tried and which he had learned in an academic way, of how man might attain peace, he now had to confess that he had been led astray. It was impossible for man to earn his salvation by good works. In the second place, he could do no other than accuse the Church, the many writers and fathers before him, of having substituted 'man's word' for 'God's Word.'¹ He took issue with many of the Papal Bulls because they misused the Sacred Scriptures, and as he continued to spell out his position, it became evident that he was in conflict with the prevailing orthodox view of authority. To maintain his position Luther simply stated his view, *sola scriptura*—the Scriptures alone are the source for inerrant teachings on the truths of religion—as the right one, and it would then naturally follow that all others were wrong. As far as his begging the question of how to prove that the Scriptures were right, this constituted for him no problem. It was a self-evident fact: the Scriptures were above all else, and needed no human argument to bear them up.

This was the principle upon which Luther stood. In the prac-

tical application, however, it raised problems. Luther along with the majority of his time accepted the fact that the Scriptures, OT and NT were a unity, and that the totality was the Word of God. What place did that leave for any type of critical study? On the one hand Luther was quite rational in his approach in analyzing the contents of the individual books—he spoke of the differences among the various writers.² But then there was also the other side—the role of the Spirit. Luther was very concerned that the Holy Spirit be given His rightful place, yet to speak to the human factors could give the impression that the Spirit was proscribed. Not so. For Luther these 'Menschlichkeiten' did not constitute anything tragic: "Es ligt nicht viel dran. Wenn ein streit in der heiligen Schrift fuerfellet und man kan in nicht vergleichen (ausgleichen), so las mans faren,"—after all, it did not affect any of the articles of the Christian faith.³

When asked what was the relationship between the Spirit and the human writer, Luther was content to quote 2 Peter 1:21—"... holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." "Gott gebraucht unsere Worte, seien es Evangelien oder Prophetien wie Instrumente, in denen er selbst die lebendigen Worte in den Herzen schreibt."⁴ If this tended toward a verbal inspiration, it was an easy thing for Luther to say on the other side: "es ist dem heiligen Geist ein schlecht Ding um ein Wort."⁵ Thus Luther saw both sides, but was not too concerned with contradictions which might appear.

But here the question is raised: what determined the approach which Luther took here? Without a doubt the answer lies in the religious experience which he had and the convictions that there came to him. Justification by faith—that was the paramount truth, and this in reality became a governing principle of all interpretation. "The same experience of justification which had led him to put the Scripture on so lofty a pedestal led him also to study it with even greater care, with a view both of his projected translation of it into the German tongue and to his own further sanctification."⁶ God had given the Scriptures through the Spirit and now He had added faith as a gift, as the organ or tool for correct scriptural interpretation. *Das sola fides* (der Glaube allein) wurde deutendes (hermeneutisches) Prinzip, der rechte Beryll, in dem alles sich spiegelte und der alles durchstrahlte."⁷ It was faith that released the Scripture from its historical qualifications and made it what it actually was, the Word of God.

There was a further problem with which Luther now had to deal. As hard as he tried, he could not always find the Gospel of Justification in the different sections of the Bible—in some places not even allegory would bring it to the fore. This was particularly disturbing in the New Testament. Hence the Reformer felt that

he must set up some criterion according to which the claim of any book to stand as a part of the Word of God could be tested. And that criterion became: 'treibt es Christum oder nicht?' If one had to answer 'no,' the particular book in question might not be regarded as evangelic or apostolic, and then could make no commanding claim on the belief or obedience of a Christian—in fact, it need not be regarded as an integral part of God's Word. But this raises the whole question of speaking of the Bible as God's Word, when perchance it may not be entirely God's Word—at least by what Luther said. It is true that he often seemed to identify the text of the Scripture with the Word of God, but this may have been to get beyond the 'literalism' of his theory and usual practice. Both Law and Gospel are seen as parts of the Word of God. The New Testament consists in part of the Gospel which is a part of the Word of God and in part of books which do not set forth the Gospel and which then are not parts of the Word of God.⁸

We may finally ask the question as to the nature of the authority which Luther ascribes to the Word of God. When he says that "there is no other evidence (*gezeugnis*) of Christian truth on earth but the Holy Scriptures," he would not have himself or anyone else believe what the Bible says simply because it is in the Bible. Rather the New and Old Testaments give to us the only original testimony which we possess of the Incarnate Word and can therefore be described as "in truth the spiritual body of Christ." Beyond that Luther claims that Scripture must be interpreted by Scripture, and not by tradition or the teaching of the Fathers.

"Hence he opposes the sole authority of Scripture to that claimed for the decrees of Popes and Councils, and still more to that accorded to Aristotle in scholastic theology. But, for Luther, all authority belongs ultimately to Christ, the Word of God, alone, and even the authority of the Scriptures is secondary and derivative, pertaining to them only inasmuch as they bear witness to Christ and are the vehicle of the Word."⁹

Davies puts the matter somewhat differently. When Luther through his Bible study discovered that all portions of the Bible did not coincide with the experience which he had had with Christ, he ceased to identify the Word of God with the Bible, for the Word of God for him was that which tallied with his experience.

But he did not put it to himself like that; what he thought and said was: the Word of God is that which preaches the Gospel—which is an entirely different method of formulation and statement. And at the end of the process the Word of God, as specified by him, emerges in his mind as an infallible, external authority. Luther 'removed the seat of religious authority from the Church'—yes, but not to the Christian consciousness, but to the Word of God. This is shown partly by the fact that, whenever he wishes to prove

a point, he always argues from the Bible (never from his own experience of Christ); and still more conclusively from the general tenor of his writings as a whole, and especially from that of the *wider die himmlischen Propheten* (where he is arguing against Carlstadt, the prophet of inward illumination), the first part of the *de servo Arbitrio*, and the *von den Concilien und Kirchen*.¹⁰

Thus the Word of God, for Luther, is something external or objective, it is infallible, in the sense that its writers were kept from writing what was false, and as such it demands submission "wholeheartedly and wholemindedly" from every man. Therein man finds the answer to salvation in Christ and experiences the new life in Christ attested to by the witness of the Spirit in every believer's heart.

We have spent some time on Luther's view, since it helps us to see the shift during the time of the Reformation, and also because Menno read a number of Luther's writings and was influenced by them. We need to say just a word about Zwingli and Calvin.

Zwingli did not have the same type of religious experience which Luther had. His early years provided him with a good education and brought him in contact with Humanism, that force which was to influence his later studies of Scripture profoundly. Through reading the works of Erasmus, Zwingli began to share Erasmus' zeal for the Scripture and his experience led him from general learning to the Scriptures for the problems which confronted him. "But I finally came to the point where I thought—led to it, of course, by the Scripture and God's Word—: 'you must leave all these things on one side and learn God's meaning simply from his own simple Word.'"¹¹ Continued study brought Zwingli to a deeper insight into the meaning of the light which had dawned upon him. His preaching became evangelical and slowly he hammered out his position for the reform which was soon to follow.

As we look at Zwingli's view of the Scriptures and their authority, we note that he too, like Luther, maintains that the Word of God is the sole and wholly authoritative source of religious truth. The Bible, for Zwingli was an organic whole, and within the Bible "the Old and New Testaments are of equal validity and authority."¹²

There are several principles which become evident as we study Zwingli's writings. Faith is necessary for a correct understanding of the Scripture.¹³ But unlike Luther, who when arguing about his view of the Eucharist, insisted that a person forms his faith from the words of Scripture,¹⁴ Zwingli said, faith cannot be formed from the words of the Bible, but that the latter are to be understood under the guidance of faith and must yield to faith. Faith has therefore become for Zwingli the true interpreter of Scripture, although he was careful to caution against a purely

subjectivistic attitude or an individual's judgment. To supplement this principle, Zwingli held that the Scripture alone decided a case—there might be no judge over the Scripture. Scripture is then called upon to interpret Scripture, and this principle Zwingli maintained against Luther when arguing about the nature of the Eucharist. With this view Zwingli was also able to maintain the independence of Scripture of the Church, claiming that it was even superior to the Church.¹⁵

In comparing Zwingli and Luther we may observe in the first place that Zwingli operates much more on the intellectual plane than does Luther. Secondly, unlike Luther, Zwingli does not distinguish between the canonical Scriptures and the Word of God. Thirdly, for Zwingli the Word of God is not something as totalitarian as it is for Luther, although near the end of his life he came much closer to Luther in this regard.

In considering Calvin's approach to Scripture and its authority, we must see it related to his quest for the truth. He asked himself where he might find the truth, for his study of the Scriptures showed him rather soon that here were conclusions quite at variance with those held by the Church. Already in his earlier writings we observe how the Scriptures become completely authoritative for him. They constitute the Word of God, are the only existent thing by which God has consecrated His truth to 'eternal memory' and these "Scriptures receive full authority among the faithful by no other right than that they [the faithful] decide that they [the Scriptures] have flowed down from heaven, as if the very words of God were there heard."¹⁶ Calvin, although using various terms to designate the Scriptures (*sermo Dei*, *verbum Dei*, *voces Dei*, *Scriptura*), used these interchangeably, and although he too raised questions about some of the books contained in the Bible, unlike Luther he does not consider part of the Bible less authoritative than others. He felt that the Old Testament had as much authority as the New—"the truth revealed in both Testaments is precisely the same..." To be sure, the two Testaments mediate the truth to men in different ways, but this does not make the Old inferior to the New.¹⁷

Calvin's view of inspiration seems a rather mechanical one. The historical books of the Old Testament were prepared "at the dictation of the Holy Spirit," the Apostles were "the certain and authentic secretaries of the Holy Spirit" and their writings were therefore to be considered as "the oracles of God."¹⁸ Hence for Calvin these inspired Scriptures, the Word of God, are authoritative for the individual, they are the only source of Christian truth, and must therefore be accepted obediently. They contain everything necessary for salvation. It is the inner witness of the Holy Spirit which establishes Scriptures' authority for Calvin. Strangely enough,

however, when others used this same tenet in points which they wished to verify, Calvin would not grant them this right, although his accusation was to the effect that they tried to have the Spirit verify their point, contrary to the teachings of Scripture.¹⁹ Yet, if the Holy Spirit established the authority of the Bible, Calvin did not go on to argue that the Holy Spirit had also established the canon.

Following from Calvin's views of authority several practical implications emerged for him. In religious matters, the Bible is completely authoritative for the individual. Equally so, it is completely authoritative for the Church, and the Church receives or obtains its authority from the Bible. But as for the State—it receives its authority from God, and the Bible has no authority over it.

When compared with Luther's and Zwingli's view of authority, Calvin's view shows one marked change. Whereas for the two, a purely external authority was the basis from which they began, Calvin maintained an 'internal element' by accepting the Bible as authoritative because he was personally convinced of its authority by its own coerciveness and the witness borne to it by the Holy Spirit. Although for Calvin this remained a rather narrow view, in its broader scope it certainly merits a place in any consideration of the authority of the Scriptures, for it remains a fact that many there are who are not convinced that the Bible is authoritative.

A further point has to do with Calvin's method of interpretation. When Luther got into trouble with his endeavor to apply the Sermon on the Mount to the State, he solved the problem by relegating these precepts to the sphere of private ethics. But Calvin was different. "He made a distinction, of course, between the role of the citizen and that of the magistrate, but the point was not that the one endures while the other resists, but that each resists with the weapons appropriate to his calling. Even the private man must not suffer his home to be polluted by sacrilege."²⁰ To defend God's honor everyone must do what he can according to his station. There were of course other ways to get around the precepts of nonresistance. For one, it all depended on the inward disposition. You might go to court, or even kill, but not vindictively. Or, one could get around the New Testament teachings by interpreting them in terms of the Old. Use the Imprecatory Psalms to interpret the Sermon on the Mount. Use also the Old Testament to support the establishment of a Church-state. When Luther had his questions about the Christian character of the State, not so Calvin. The State was a divine institution to vindicate God's wrath on the wrongdoer, and Calvin was ever ready to exhort the rulers to 'energetic action for the abolition of false religion.' Even he was sometimes shocked at the demands made by God in the Old Testa-

ment, but his answer was: who is man to question the infinite wisdom and judgment of God?

Finally we observe that the risen Christ, as King, Priest and Prophet was one of the focal points toward which Calvin's exegesis and interpretation tended to gravitate. This we need to bear in mind as we study Calvin's view of Scripture and its authority, just as we need to remember the dominant note of justification by faith in Luther's total approach.

II. MENNO'S HERMENEUTICS

A. Spiritual Struggles

It is against this background of the shift to the '*sola scriptura*' during the time of the Reformation that we come to our consideration of Menno Simons. Born in 1496, Menno was thirteen years younger than Luther, twelve years younger than Zwingli and thirteen years older than Calvin. Luther outlived Zwingli by fifteen years, Menno outlived Luther by fifteen years, while Calvin lived just three years beyond Menno's death in 1561. When Menno was consecrated a priest in 1524, both Luther and Zwingli were well on the way in their programs of reform. Both had already done some writing, and through these writing and others which were to follow Menno was to learn to know them, Luther undoubtedly much better than Zwingli.

Menno's early life and spiritual struggle as he himself has spelled it out for us, is known to most of us.²¹ Apparently the Bible had remained a closed book to him even while he trained for the priesthood and then later when he took up his duties. This cannot mean that he had not read the book, at least portions of it, and so his statement that God's Word was locked before his eyes, written as it was many years after his conversion, probably implies spiritual blindness—the failure to be able to discern spiritual truths.

Menno's training, although it did not compare with that of the other Reformers, was nevertheless such as enabled him to keep in touch with the feeling and thinking of his time. He knew Latin well, even though he used it sparingly, primarily because his reading audience were the common people who spoke little or no Latin. Furthermore he had some knowledge of the Greek.²² The Church Fathers were appreciated by him, although it is not clear whether he read them directly at firsthand. There are good indications that he read many of them in secondary sources, particularly in Franck's *Geschichtsbibel*. That Menno must have read German is evident from the fact that he read both the *Geschichtsbibel* and some of Luther's writings before they were translated, as well as from the fact that he made use of the German Bible in his later

Bible study.²³ In his later life Menno referred to the fact that he treasured learning, and cultivated language study, although not as ends in themselves.²⁴ Menno also read the writings of other Reformers—Zwingli, Melancthon and Oecolampad—and of course, Erasmus was held in fairly high esteem by him. In view of this it is evident that Menno felt the pulse-beat of his time and that to some extent various movements or forces influenced him. There was Humanism which left its impact, albeit more through its 'climate' than through any particular concrete thing;²⁵ there was the Sacramentist movement in the Netherlands, also more indirect than direct²⁶; and of course there was the whole Reformation movement as such.

Space forbids our entering to any extent into the struggles through which Menno went. When doubts concerning the Mass came to him, he finally went to the Scriptures and "ick quam niet verre daer in/ick sag haest dat wy bedrogen waren.²⁷ That was a revelation! And it had its immediate results. "en mijn bekommerde Conscientie over der voornoemden brode/worde van de becommernisse oock sonder all aenwijsinge haest ontlost:" Here it was that something happened which carried tremendous overtones with it. The Scriptures had suddenly become authoritative for him, superceding even the authority of the Church. And one of Luther's writings had been a profound help: "Nochtans soo vele van Luthero geholpen, dat menschen geboden ten eeuwigen doode niet verbinden konden."²⁸

We can be sure that as was the case with the other Reformers, so Menno also had no ideas of leaving the Church. In fact, he remained with the Church another nine years. But Menno's path did not lead him the way in which Luther went. It was true that Luther had helped him to the conviction that human statutes—laws made by the Church of Rome—could not destine a man to eternal damnation, as in the case of the questioning of transubstantiation,²⁹ but whereas Luther tried to remain just as near to the Catholic view as possible, Menno's view in this instance was one of sharp contrast. His interpretation had a close affinity to that of Calvin. As a person the 'outer man' partakes of the elements, the 'inner man' receives the invisible bread and wine through the promise of Christ.³⁰

The second problem which confronted Menno had to do with baptism. When this became an issue through the beheading of Sicke Freriks Snijder, Menno followed the logical course of action open to him. The New Testament had given enlightenment concerning the Lord's Supper. What did it have to say about a 'second baptism'? Once again he was surprised, for he could find no teaching concerning child baptism. But he wasn't satisfied. In quick succession he lists various other sources which he consulted,³¹

all of which however, did not square with the teachings of the Scriptures. He concluded that the Church had betrayed them.³²

Two pillars of the church had fallen, but Menno was not yet ready to follow through on the consequences of his convictions. When an offer for a better position came (Witmarsum) he accepted, but because of various factors, such as Muenster, Old Cloister, and what he felt were undeserved 'compliments' (he was considered an evangelical preacher), his spiritual struggle grew apace and finally climaxed in his conversion.³³ The grace for which he implored God was granted him; he experienced the acceptance with the Lord and with a sense of divine calling and a holy mission he entered upon the new life. This was the outcome of his years of struggle, first concerning the Lord's Supper, then concerning baptism, and finally concerning the life of dedication which, he was fully convinced, was demanded by God's Word and required of those who cast their lot with the Lord Jesus Christ. Another nine months he continued to preach from his pulpit in Witmarsum, now ready at any time to bear the consequences of his choice. As for some time, so now in a particular way, Menno was preaching from the Scriptures. His plea was that he might preach the Holy Word 'onvervalscht.'

Now he preached the 'Woord eener warer Boeten' and corrected and released those who had been ensnared, through God's help with 'Gods Woord.' Having granted this Word, the Bible, complete authority, Menno followed through on that principle throughout his life. The Reformational keystone had also been appropriated by him: *Sola Scriptura!*

B. The Bible as Authority for Menno

In the preceding section we have noted how Menno came to the Scriptures for the answer to his questions concerning the nature of the Lord's Supper and baptism. From the standpoint of his experience we can readily understand how and why the Bible would be most important for him. In a sense his experience was similar to that of Luther. Luther wrestled through to a spiritual victory in his struggle with sin on the basis of the truth which became the keystone of his position—*sola fides*. In our earlier consideration we pointed out that this influenced his whole approach to the Scriptures from that time on. With Menno we see the same attitude established by the experiences which he had had. In his struggles, the ultimate and conclusive answer had been found only in the Bible—all other sources had proven inadequate. With this set over against the Catholic Church with its teachings (concerning which Menno had to confess that they had been *bedrogen*) we can readily understand how high would be his estimation of the Bible.

Menno's writings reveal throughout that the Scriptures for him were normative and authoritative. For him the question is not, What does this or that source say? but What does the Scripture say? No concern of his is more basic than to prove a point or to set forth a teaching from Scripture only. "The Scriptures say," "Scriptures testify abundantly," "prove by the Scriptures," "observe the Scriptures carefully," "if anyone should still be in doubt (impossible to a man of understanding, so clear is the Scripture),"³⁴ are expressions which indicate that fact. In a paper on Menno's use of the Scriptures, Ellis Graber lists some three hundred phrases of this type taken from Part I of the Funk Edition of Menno's Works,³⁵ and then goes on to say: "In his *Fundamental*, for instance, there is not a single full page in which one does not find either a reference to a passage of Scripture, quotations from the Scriptures, or use of the word scriptures. This is surely a minimum statement to show his use of the Scriptures as there are other indirect uses which have not been covered in either Study I or Study II. Practically the same situation prevails in other writings of Part I."³⁶

From the very start Menno felt constrained to uphold the authority of Scripture. His first writing (the one against Jan van Leyden) was in a sense a polemic against the Muensterites, whose teachings he saw growing out of an allegorical interpretation of Scripture and out of chiliastic prophetism.³⁷ When challenged by D. Joris to a debate, Menno wrote saying that his preparation and armor is the Word of God, the Gospel. He accuses Joris of having given this up long ago.³⁸ Menno had no greater desire, than to teach correctly from the Word of God. In his *De Oorsake waerom dat ick Menno Symons niet af en late te Leeren, ende te Schrijven*, Menno tells his readers about his concern to teach the true love and fear of God, etc. and then says:

Bedenckt dat nu recht in uwer herten/ of dese dingen die hier aengeteekent zijn/ alsoo den goeden wille Godts/ die rechte leeringe Jesu Christi/ dat oprechte gebruyk sijner Sacramenten/ ende dat rechte leven/ het welke dat uyt Godt is/ niet en zijn/ alhoewel dat alle die poorten der Hellen hier en tegen so weetelijken strijden en vechten.

Siet mijn weerde Broeders/ tegen dese voorberoerde leer-ingen Sacramenten/ ende leven/ gelden over al niet Keyserlijke Placaten/ geen Pauselijke Decreten/ geen Concilien der Geleerden/ geen lange gewoonten der tijden/ geen Menschelijke Philosophie/ geen Origenes/ geen Augustinus, geen Lutherus, geen Bucerus, geen vangen/ bannen noch moorden/ want het is dat eeuwige onvergancelijke Godts Woort/ het is segge ik noch eens: Het sal't oock blijven tot in der ewigheydt.³⁹

This Word of God which abides forever, Menno seeks to teach.

Mijn Broeders/ ick segge u de waerheyt/ ende en liege u niet: Ick en ben geen Enoch/ ick en ben geen Elias/ ick en

ben geen Siender/ noch Propheet/ die anders leeren ende Propheten kan/ *dan uyt dat uytgedruckte letterlijke beschreven Godts Woordt in den Geest recht gevaet.* Ende alle de gene die anders soeckt te leeren/ die sal wel haestelijck van de rechte bane wijcken/ ende in sijn verstant bedrogen worden. Ick en twijffel daer niet aen/ oft die barmhertige Vader sal my alsoo in sijnen woorden bewaren/ dat ick met en sal schriiven noch spreken/ dan alleen dat gene/ *dat ick krachtelijcken magh beweeren met Mose/ oft met den Propheten/ oft met dem Evangelisten/ oft met andere Apostolische schriften ende Leeringen recht aengeweesen nae den sin/ geest/ ende meyninge Christi;* oordeelt ghy die Gestelijck zijt.⁴⁰

The above quote draws attention to a combination of terms which needs a further comment. On the one hand Menno refers to the "uytgedruckte letterlijke beschreven Godts Woordt," while on the other he speaks of it "in den Geest recht gevaet." It is true that Menno's interpreters in the past have sought to place him in to either of two camps: on the one hand he has been seen as being too literalistic in his interpretation. Numerous statements may be adduced to support that contention. Menno can ask or inform his readers that there is not a single letter, word, or command which supports a certain belief or practice.⁴¹ Luther was undoubtedly thinking of this 'literal' interpretation when he accused the Anabaptists of leaning "too far to the right when they teach miserable stuff like this: that it is wrong to own private property, to swear, to hold office as a ruler or judge, to protect or defend oneself, to stay with wife and children."⁴² Others made similar charges.

Then, on the other hand, Menno is said to be too 'free' with his interpretation. We can find places where Menno takes others to task for being too 'literal.' "He (the Antichrist) presses them closely, for he knows how skillfully to defend his cause with the letter of the Scriptures."⁴³ In the section on excommunication he says:

Mijn Siele is dickwils banger als ick schrijuen can/ de God der crachten stercke my. Ende dat om des wille dat ick sie/ dat des Heeren huys so menigen swaren aenstoot/ niet alleene van buyten/ maer oock van binnen lijden moet. Och mannen wapent v/ *Want recht is Paulus woort/ dat den dienst des nieuwen Testaments gheen en dienst des Letters/ maer des Gheests is/ 2. Corin. 3. Can daerom oock van gheen en houerdigen/ stoute/ roemgierigen/ oft eygensinnighen/ diet alles na haer eygen affect/ sin/ en gemoet rechten willen/ recht tot des Heeren prijs bedient worden/ sullen altijt meer afbreken als bouwen/ meer schaden als voorderen. Moet ooc also geschien/ dewijle het (segghen ick) na inhout Pauli leere/ niet diepheydt des vernunfts/ noch gepronckte menschelijcke woorden/ boeckstaue/ ofte doode letter/dien sy ghemeynlijcks vol zijn/ maer Godt /gheest/ waerheyt/ cracht/ ende leuen is/ dien sy bloot zijn. Och doeter acht op.*⁴⁴

Menno's concern is that the ministry of the New Testament is not a ministry of the letter but of the Spirit. Now we can quote Luther on the other side: "Our Anabaptist schismatics seduce many people by yelling that the Gospel we have is not the right one, since they claim that it does not produce any fruit and that the people remain wicked, proud, and greedy. Or they say that you have to have something more than the mere Word and letter; you have to have the Spirit working, and an honest resolution to improve your life. If what we have really were the Word of God, it would certainly produce fruit."⁴⁵ The emphasis of Menno on the Spirit, has led some to accuse him of a similar spiritualization to that which marked the writings of Franck and Schwenkfeld. But this is certainly not the case. When accused of giving his own pronouncements Menno says, No! "I am no prophet who can teach and prophesy otherwise than what is written in the Word of God and understood by the Spirit." Further on he says:

Once more, I have no visions nor angelic inspirations. Neither do I desire such lest I be deceived. The Word of Christ alone is sufficient for me. If I do not follow His testimony, then verily all that I do is useless, and even if I had such visions and inspirations, which is not the case, *even then it would have to be conformable to the Word and Spirit of Christ, or else it would be mere imagination, deceit, and satanic temptation.*⁴⁶

C. Principles of Interpretation Menno Used

From what has been adduced by way of examples it has become clear that Menno valued the Scriptures above any other authority. But as with the other Reformers, who presupposed an additional principle which served as the starting point, so also with Menno. Earlier we referred to the fact that for Luther this starting point, this 'Interpretationsprinzip,' was justification by faith.⁴⁷ "Hier ist das 'sola scriptura durch das sola fide bedingt.'"⁴⁸ For the Reformed this starting point was the Sovereign God. He makes known His will and His demands. With the strong emphasis on predestination, the 'subjective' element which was rather prominent in Lutheranism, was more or less absent. Because God is sovereign one also sees the Old and New Testaments as being basically the same. (Note our earlier discussion of Calvin.)

With Menno there was a difference. His coming to Scripture may well be termed a 'Christo-centric approach.' God was sovereign, to be sure, but the demands at Sinai and through the prophets are tempered and in a sense re-channelled. Krahn says, "... die Vorderungen . . . werden in her christlichen Gemeinde durch Christus und das Zeugnis und die Lehren der Apostel reduziert, konzentriert und verabsolutiert. Der Berg der Seligpreisungen macht den Sinai unscheinbar."⁴⁹ One can scarcely read any of Menno's writings without seeing this central place of Christ in the study and

interpretation of the Bible. "All Scripture must be interpreted according to the spirit, teaching, walk and example of Christ and the apostles."⁵⁰

Here we approach the perspective center toward which everything converges. Menno met the living Christ as Redeemer and Lord, and this One determined even the approach to Scripture. We have seen how the Scriptures were completely authoritative for Menno, but it was not long before the problem of different interpretations arose, to wit, the Reformational principle of *sola scriptura* leading the several Reformers in quite different directions. For Menno there were several factors which led him to focus attention on the Person Who became predominant in his life. There was his searching experience for peace of soul; there was the guilt feeling concerning the Old Cloister episode; there was the feeling of having shied away from suffering when Jesus had suffered unto death for men; and there was the strong polemic against Jan van Leyden. In this polemic Menno is intent on showing that Christ alone is King over all—He supplies the needs of man's life, both physical and spiritual,—and within the scope of just a few pages statement after statement raises Christ to the pedestal which He rightfully deserves.

a) We see how interpretation itself is to proceed from Christ. "All Scripture, both of the Old and New Testament, rightly explained according to the intent of Christ Jesus and His holy apostles, is profitable for doctrine, reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. II Tim. 3:16. But whatever is taught contrary to the Spirit and doctrine of Jesus is accursed of God."⁵¹ Trust is to be placed 'in Christ alone and in His Word.'

b) We notice how the relationship of the Old and the New Testament is seen in terms of Jesus Christ. Many references which in the Old Testament speak of the Lord are immediately applied to Christ. In this respect Menno is similar in his approach to that of Dirk Philips in that the types and figures of the Old Testament see their fulfillment literally in Christ and the Christian Church. Allegory was quite common in this connection, e.g. the promise to David of a son, Solomon, can be understood as referring to Christ.⁵² With Menno as with the Anabaptists in general the relationship of the Old Testament to the New was one of 'progressive revelation,' and all Scriptures, therefore, needed to be interpreted in the light of Christ. "This teaching was one of primary importance in relation to ethics, eschatology, as well as ecclesiology."⁵³

c) This points up further that an appeal for an ethical life commensurate with the faith held stems from the living Christ Who is the Head of the Church, His Bride. For Menno, Christ, the Re-

deemer and Lord is also the example. He has taught us and shown us what our life should be.

d) Christ then is also the One Whose suffering points to the suffering through which we must go. To be a follower of Christ is to suffer as He suffered. For Menno the Cross of Christ is the event which constitutes the watershed of history, and at the same time it is the principle which guides God's people through life.⁵⁴

From what we have considered thus far, it is evident that Menno brought certain presuppositions to his study of the Scriptures. They were the Word of *ica*. This Word is interpreted and men are enlightened by the Holy Spirit. More than that, for men to understand the Scriptures, they must be obedient to them; they must follow through on the commands as given in the Scriptures. God's Word is not just theory (it is not just something about which one theologizes), it is the guide for a life lived for God.

Yet for all that, certain rather crucial problems confront us. If the Bible is God's Word, what of the human factor? We remember that with Luther, the fact that 'inconsistencies' prevailed did not bother him. Menno, unlike Luther, was not concerned with critical studies. He did not discount 'learning' as such, yet he was undoubtedly kept from the undertaking of critical studies because of the misuse that the 'learned Doctors' made of their 'knowledge.'⁵⁵ Secondly, concerning the relationships of the two Testaments, we have already pointed out how the New was seen as a fulfillment of the Old. This speaks both of the different forms or manifestations which are evident, while at the same time drawing attention to the essential unity and harmony. The Scriptures cannot contradict themselves, and when there are those who try to adduce arguments from the Old Testament supporting violence and bloodshed, Menno insists that this is "diametrically opposed to the Spirit, Word, and example of Christ."⁵⁶

It is in this connection that we meet up with another problem. When one does find statements which seem contradictory, for once between the two Testaments, and then also even within the New Testament, how does one resolve the Conflict? As regards the Old Testament, we have already seen how Christ must be seen as the focal point speaking decisively to any interpretation of the Old. As regards differences within the New Testament, Menno maintains that there is often a literal meaning and a spiritual meaning. Comparison will reveal which one should be chosen. This was exemplified in the conflict regarding the nature of the Lord's Supper. If some statements of Christ indicated a literal meaning, others indicated a spiritual meaning. Here Scripture was called upon to interpret Scripture. More than that, it was also at this point that another rule became normative for Menno: what was not expressly commanded, should not be practiced, to wit, child

baptism. (The other Reformers operated by the rule, what was not expressly forbidden, could be practiced.)

Space and time limitations prevent us from going into further problems which confront us in Menno's hermeneutical approach. Let us just enumerate them. There is the matter of contextual relationships. Menno is quite adept at using a 'proof-text' method, quite oblivious to the implications. Even though one sees the essential unity in the Scriptures, it is hardly an acceptable method merely to tie a series of passages which treat of the same matter, together, and thus feel that the meaning has been given. In this regard Menno's presentation was much more of a running discourse, than a thorough exegetical study. Furthermore, Menno had no critical questions concerning the content of the canon. From the manner in which he quotes from the Apocrypha, it seems evident that he accepts these books along with the other Biblical books, although of course, his infrequent usage of them would indicate in part their being relegated to a lesser place as far as importance goes. This raises the further question of the divine and human factors involved. Is it sufficient to speak of the Holy Spirit as the author, or can one give an adequate interpretation without seeing the human factors involved?

There is the further matter of who may be an interpreter? And how does this relate to one's sense of mission? Luther had the definite conviction that he had been sent to proclaim the Gospel to the Germans. Menno it would seem, could also speak of a very definite mission to those who were the 'persecuted' of the time. It took quite some time before Menno heeded the call, but once he had made the decision, he carried on, and no hardship was too great, if it meant service to the brotherhood, and the furtherance of Christ's cause—tending the flock of Jesus Christ. This then also influenced his interpretation. Also in this connection, we may ask about motivation: is service given purely as an act of obedience, or does one consider himself as an instrument of the Holy Spirit? Or is this stating the question in the wrong way? Should one speak of both/and, rather than either/or? Menno appears to have operated on both assumptions.

Finally, before we summarize, let us observe that Menno in the various experiences which he had, could in a real way enter into the very life as depicted in the Bible. Once having cast in his lot with that way which he felt that Scripture depicted, he viewed the entire message also from that vantage point, and his interpretations were given accordingly. His discussions of persecution, e.g., were certainly more meaningful than those of the other Reformers, who were on the 'giving' end. And so the 'empathizing' of the Biblical characters brought out depths of meaning not discovered otherwise.

SUMMARY

We have rightly observed that the Anabaptists were more thorough-going than the other Reformers. In the area of consistent 'follow-through' Menno also was no exception. When the other Reformers saw a point and felt that rightfully speaking they should act on it, expediency kept them back, e.g. Luther with infant baptism, or his granting concessions for the sake of political leaders. We already said that Luther wanted to remain as close to the Roman church as he could. For Menno this was not possible. Having seen what was required, he gave himself unre-servedly to the task and bore up under the suffering which was his lot. He can only speak with disdain of those who shun suffering.

With the approach to the Scriptures that we see with Menno we are aware of certain implications. For once, it certainly let him speak to his time. Undoubtedly it was here that both his insistence on the deeper meaning as his entering as completely as possible into the situation—his empathizing the experiences—led him to speak an applicable word to current situations. That he was flexible with his emphasis on 'literal' and 'spiritual' was in order, although we do well to note that Menno also was guilty of extremes in either case (spiritual by way of reading into Old Testament passages a New Testament content; literal by way of stringing passages together apart from the context and hence forcing their meaning). Menno did not hesitate to speak to the political leaders, as his writings show. He spoke to the social and economic conditions, although perhaps more within the brotherhood context. His strict approach led him to strive for the disciplined fellowship, and that in every area of life.

In making a comparison with the other Reformers at this point we see Calvin as being very keen on discipline. For him faith should manifest itself in the life of the nation. Luther thought of the established system as it was, and would have practical discipline only in the case of marriage and adultery. All discipline connected with the penitential was dropped. Again for Calvin, the Church as a fellowship was so important. For Luther the Church remains an institution where the Word is preached and the Sacraments are administered. With Menno we find a definite correlation between the fellowship and the interpretation of the Scriptures. Scripture is applied and it becomes the norm against which the standing of the Bride of Christ is measured. Strict discipline was thus practiced, although we observe that herein Menno tempered his view in later life. At this point Menno did not go as far as Calvin. For him it was impossible to have the nation's life changed unless the individual members saw the necessity of a personal response to God's Son.

Very briefly we may draw together Menno's hermeneutical approach to the Scriptures.

1. The nucleus around which the Biblical material is arranged is the Living Christ: Christ, the Head of the congregation, demands our obedience and as the Suffering Christ He evokes our loving response. This brings in the Church concept, discipline, etc.

2. Scripture is an organic unity, yet the New Testament becomes definitive and Christ is normative for our faith.

3. Scripture interprets Scripture.

4. The Holy Spirit is the Interpreter of the Word.

5. He who interprets must enter into the experiences of those who wrote. (Incidentally, here Menno operates on the assumption [perhaps unconsciously] that the human factor is there and needs to be considered.)

6. The believing fellowship must serve as a check against personal interpretation. (We may well ask whether Menno was willing to listen to others. He was willing to debate with others, but the question here would be with what attitude one would approach such a debate. Menno's words were: "Show us the Word and it suffices.")

7. The Bible is not a book of riddles. It has a message for man's practical life and eternal destiny. (Here we can mention Menno's reactions against the extremities of Muenster, date-setting, etc. God has knowledge of the end and He will guide history to its completion.)

More study is needed to spell out the finer points and further implications of Menno's use of the Scripture. The discussion following may well address itself a little more to this approach in terms of speaking to the topic of culture, thinking of the framework of this conference. Coming with a sincerity and concern such as Menno had, we can certainly learn much from this child of the Reformation whose followers we profess to be.

FOOTNOTES

¹"They had built on the findings and theories of Aristotle, and not on the Word of God to be found in the Scriptures; they had set up as criterion of religious truth conformity to the demands of human reason, rather than to the revealed mind of God." Rupert E. Davies, *The Problem of Authority in the Continental Reformers*. (London: The Epworth Press, 1946), p. 18.

²One needs only to read the introductions to the various books in his Bible, or his comments in other writings such as the 'Tischreden', cf. Walther Koehler, *Dogmengeschichte* (Zuerich: Max Niehans Verlag A. G.), p. 111.

³WA 46, 727. Koehler speaks to Luther's practice in this regard: "Wenn Matth. 27, 9 dem Jeremias einen Spruch zuschrieb, der bei Sacharja steht, also der Evangelist einem Gedächtnisfehler unterlag, so meinte Luther: 'solche und dergleichen Fragen bekümmern mich nicht hoch, weil sie wenig

zur sachen dienen'; die Hauptsache ist 'das er gewisse schrift furet, ob er gleich nicht so eben den namen trifft.' Und wenn der Evangelist auch anderweitig ungenau zitierte, so macht das weiter nichts, weil as 'on alle (ge) fahr des synnes geschieht' (*WA* 23, 642). Widersprueche der Berichter-statter ueber dasselbe Ereignis konnten damit ausgeglichen werden: 'es kann auch wohl sein, das der Herr solchs mehr dann einmal getan hat' (*WA* 46, 726). So wurde die Aporie zugedeckt in einer fuer Luther gluecklichen Freiheit, die dann aber weiterhin nach rechts und links auseinandertrat." *Ibid.*, p. 111.)

⁴Quoted by Koehler, p. 112.

⁵*WA* 38, 2; 36; 104.

⁶Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁷Koehler, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

⁸The following quote indicates what Luther thought of the relationship between the Word of God and the books of the New Testament:

The task of a true Apostle is that he preach about Christ's sufferings, Resurrection, and office, and lay the foundation of this faith, as Christ himself says in John xviii, "ye shall bear witness of me"; and all genuine holy books agree in this respect, that they all preach Christ and treat of Him. Moreover, one applies the true touchstone for judging all books, if one sees whether they treat of Christ or not, since all Scripture shows forth Christ (Romans iii), and Paul wishes to know nothing save Christ (1 Cor. ii). That which does not preach Christ is not apostolic, even if Paul or Peter is the teacher; again, that which preaches Christ is apostolic, even if Judas, Annas, Pilate, and Herod do the preaching. *WA*, Deutsche Bibel, Bd. 7, p. 384. Quoted by Davies, p. 34.

⁹Philip S. Watson, *Let God Be God* (London: The Epworth Press, 1947; reprinted 1954), p. 174f.

¹⁰Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 39f.

¹¹*Zwingli's Werke*, I, 379, Quoted by Davies, p. 65.

¹²Davies, p. 89. The Word of God ought to be held by us in the highest honour—and by the 'Word of God' understand only that which comes from the Spirit of God—and such faith given to no word as to it. For the Word of God is certain and cannot fail; it is bright and does not let man err in darkness; it teaches of itself, it makes itself plain, and illumines the human soul with all salvation and grace. . . . *ZW* I, 382.

¹³*of.* Koehler, p. 122.

¹⁴*WA*, XIX, 485.

¹⁵Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

¹⁶II, 56 (Inst., I cap. vii), Quoted by Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

¹⁷"The covenant made with all the fathers is so far from differing from ours in substance and reality (*substantia et re*) that it is altogether one and the same." (Inst. 2:10:2) Also quoted by Davies, p. 111.

¹⁸II, 849, *Inst.*, IV, viii, 6; II, 851, 852 (IV, viii, 9)

¹⁹II, 59, 60 (*Inst.*, I, vii, 4, 5), Quoted by Davies, p. 140.

²⁰Roland Bainton, *Concerning Heretics*, p. 72; ref. to *Calvini Opera*, VIII, 470.

²¹*Uytgange ofte bekeeringe van Menno Symons*. . . 1554.

²²*Opera*, *Omina*, 348a.

²³*cf.* Frerichs, *DB*, 1905, p. 72ff.

²⁴*Complete Writings*, p. 790.

²⁵Robert Kreider, "Anabaptism and Humanism," in *MQR*, April, 1952, p. 132 f.

²⁶C. Krahn, *Menno Simons*, p. 19f.

- ²⁷*Opera Omnia*, 256a.
- ²⁸*Opera Omnia*, 256a.
- ²⁹Menno had been taught as a good Catholic that to question the Church's doctrines meant eternal death.
- ³⁰*Een Fondament ende clare aenwijsinghe* . . . 1562, Fol. 57a.
- ³¹*Opera Omnia*, 256a
- ³²*Ibid.*, 256b.
- ³³*Ibid.*, 257a.
- ³⁴*Complete Works*, p. 37-41—these are just a few samples from one of his first writings *Een gantsch duydelyck ende klaer Bewys, uyt de Heylige Schriftuure* . . .
- ³⁵*The Complete Works of Menno Simons*, translated from the original Dutch or Holland, First Part; Elkhart, Indiana: John F. Funk and Brother, 1871.
- ³⁶*Menno Simons and the Scriptures*, Paper by Ellis Graber, 1944, presented in Lieu of the Comprehensive in Systematic Theology, p. 52, footnote 16.
- ³⁷cf. Krahn, *op. cit.*, p. 104.
- ³⁸Krahn, p. 66.
- ³⁹*Opera*, 445a, b. (Italics mine)
- ⁴⁰*Opera*, 448b. (Italics mine)
- ⁴¹Funk ed., I, pp. 50, 88, 111, 31, 36, 41, 63, etc.
- ⁴²*Luther's Works*, The Sermon on the Mount, Vol. 21, ed. J. Pelikan, Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956, p. 5.
- ⁴³Funk ed. p. 242.
- ⁴⁴*Fondament*, 1562, Fol. 381a. (Italics mine)
- ⁴⁵Luther, *Sermon on the Mount*, *op. cit.*, p. 254.
- ⁴⁶Luther too, has his passages which could lead to the charge of an unwholesome spiritual emphasis. Holl says: "Luther hebt die Notwendigkeit des Geistes zuweilen so kraeftig hervor, dass seine Ausdruecke an Enthusiasmus zu streifen scheinen. Aber seine Absicht ist doch nie das aeussere Wort auszuschalten." In Wiswedel, I, p. 19.
- ⁴⁷Koehler, p. 104.
- ⁴⁸Gollwitzer, *Lutherisch, reformiert, evangelisch in: Evangelische Theologie*, 1934, Heft 8, p. 316. Quoted by Krahn, p. 108f.
- ⁴⁹Krahn, p. 108.
- ⁵⁰Funk, ed. I, p. 65.
- ⁵¹*Complete Works*, p. 312.
- ⁵²*Ibid.*, p. 42; cf. also p. 37.
- ⁵³Bruno Penner, *The Anabaptist View of the Scripture* (Thesis submitted at Bethany Biblical Seminary, 1955), p. 82.
- ⁵⁴*Complete Writings*, p. 583. cf. E. Stauffer, "The Anabaptist Theology of Martyrdom," *MQR*, 1945, p. 190.
- ⁵⁵cf. *Complete Works*, p. 207ff; 214, 302.
- ⁵⁶The translation in the *Complete Works* reads, "so clearly and flatly contrary to the Spirit, the Word, and the example of the Lord." p. 600.

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THE RELATION OF THE OLD AND NEW COVENANTS IN PILGRAM MARPECK'S THEOLOGY

By William Klassen

Ever since the second century when the awareness of a New Testament canon began to simmer in the subconscious of the church the problem of the Old and New Covenants and their mutual relationships has been acute. As we all know Marcion gets the credit for having fanned this irritating spark, and whatever one says by way of censure or praise about Marcion we all agree that the problem on which he placed his finger is not an imaginary one. Essentially we all agree further that he did not exaggerate the problem when he pictures the prophet of God in the Old Testament with his arms outstretched while the enemies of Yahweh are being murdered, while the New Testament Messiah stretches out his arms on a cross and allows himself to be murdered in an act of unselfish love. In the Old Testament Joshua detained the sun until his wrath went down, in the New we are told not to let the sun go down on our wrath (Eph. 4:26).¹

Marcion had two concerns. His theological concern was that the emerging moralism and legalism (seen so clearly in the First Epistle of Clement) should not replace Paul's gospel of freedom and justification by faith. His hermeneutical concern was that the church should be spared the vagaries of allegory so blatantly portrayed in the Epistle of Barnabas. On both concerns he lost, partly no doubt because he overstated his case and the opposing church fathers threw out the baby with the bath. Whatever the precise causes there is no doubt that allegorical interpretation ruled the day² and one needs only read Clement of Alexandria's lengthy description of table manners to see that at least one church father had moved several degrees from the Pauline ethic whose dominant motif is freedom. To be sure there were remarkable exceptions already in the second century. Melito of Sardis, in his Homily on the Passion evidences a method of scriptural exegesis which represents a typology a far cry from the allegory of Barnabas. The Antiochian fathers in later days, notably Theodore of Mopsuestia,³ Theodoret, and John Chrysostom refused to bow at the shrine of allegory, but let us remember that these men are only now returning to general favor and prominence through the efforts of modern scholars. They have caused scarcely a ripple in the vast exegetical pool extending from their time to our own.

The exception from the second century already is Irenaeus. In

reaction to Marcion Irenaeus was the first to develop a rather full-fledged Biblical theology.⁴ To counter Marcion's two gods, Irenaeus began with the plural "covenants" in the New Testament (Rom. 9:4; Eph. 2:12) and divided history into four dispensations or economies of God's dealing with men. Here is the first developed concept of progressive revelation, and the question must remain open whether this solution to the problem is the best the church can propose. Of its widespread influence there can be no doubt.

Augustine too in his battles with the Manicheans struggled in trying to define the relationship between the Old and New Covenants. His task was made somewhat easier by the fact that the Old Covenant could easily be relegated to a position of interest but not authority through allegory and also through the unfortunate circumstance that Jerome seems to have been one of few prominent church fathers who took the Old Testament scriptures seriously enough to study the language in which it was written.⁵

During the middle ages Jewish scholars influenced Christian scholars greatly and when the Reformation was ushered in Hebrew lexicography had progressed so much that there remained no doubt about the importance of learning Hebrew.⁶ Luther encouraged the young theologians to learn Hebrew. Even with respect to the Pauline letters of the New Testament he observes the importance of knowing Hebrew. "The words and concepts of Paul are taken out of the prophets and Moses. Therefore the young theologians should learn Hebrew in order that they may set (the Hebrew words) beside the Greek and note their peculiarity, their nature and their force. . . . If I were young and wished to become a famous theologian, I would compare Paul with the Old Testament."⁷ Luther groaned because Hebrew was difficult and never claimed to have mastered it, but we can only sympathize with him on that score!

It is no cause for surprise that when the Bible was restored to the common man at the time of the Reformation one of the most urgent problems was that of the Old Testament. A host of issues including images, war, usury, worship, and infant baptism all in varying degrees were supported by reference to the Old Testament. The two major hermeneutical issues of the Reformation were the relation of the Old and New Covenants and the relation of the Word and Spirit. On both the Anabaptists provoked the discussion and determined its course to a much greater extent than is generally recognized.⁸ Harnack is mistaken when he asserts that the retention of the Old Testament in the church's canon at the time of the Reformation was due to an unavoidable accident.⁹ It was no accident that the Reformers retained it, it was merely a logical result of their basic conservatism. Nor was it an accident that the Anabaptists retained it; they accepted it as God's word

and struggled (not always successfully) to reconcile its differences with the New.

The prominence of this issue is clearly illustrated by the way it emerges at every major disputation; at the Franckenthal Gespräch it is clearly the most burning issue that separates Reformers from Anabaptists. Baptism, the oath, bearing of arms, and other issues remained divisive issues between the Anabaptists and Reformers because the Old Testament was viewed differently.

Considerable energy has been expended in the effort to ascertain the origin of the rigid distinction made among the Anabaptists between the two covenants. Much has been made by Roland Bainton and Frank Wray of the dependence of the Anabaptists in their view of history upon Joachim da Fiore. As far as Marpeck is concerned there is not a shred of evidence that he is indebted to Joachim. He would have rejected da Fiore's doctrine of the three ages as well as his "doctrine of the concordance between the Old and New Testaments which rests on the fundamental unity of the People of God in history."¹⁰ The periodization of history which Bainton and Wray find in the Anabaptists and the restitution element so strongly emphasized by Franklin Littell are both altogether lacking in Marpeck.

It seems quite plausible to find Marpeck's differentiation between the Old and New Testaments growing out of his experience at Strasbourg. His position is obviously hammered out against that of Bucer, Capito, Johannes Bänderlin, and Schwenckfeld. As he saw the way in which Bucer was led on his position on the Old Testament, Marpeck drove his stakes deeper and hung on.

In this paper we will take a look at the way in which Marpeck's position developed. It is assumed that we are all familiar with the facts of his life and his strategic importance in the Anabaptist movement.¹¹ Born about 1490 his life runs almost concurrent with that of Menno Simons and his importance stems from the fact that he was an Anabaptist from the beginning, his leadership extending into the second generation of Anabaptism in south Germany. He is one of the most prolific Anabaptist writers, his extant writings exceeding those of Menno by the ratio four to one. Recently I have been bold enough to claim that two more of his works have been discovered and I am awaiting the time when some scholar will prove through some new discovery that I am wrong; until then I am convinced on the basis of style and content that the two long lost booklets of 1531 can now be located.¹²

Marpeck was a leader of undisputed reputation among the Anabaptists. Never is his authority challenged and, while the Hutterites didn't like his church union technique, no one ever disagreed with him on a central doctrinal issue. The Swiss Brethren were afraid of his emphasis on freedom and shied away from his inter-

pretation on this part of Paul's gospel, and the Melchiorites (for obvious reasons) did not like his Christology. So much for Marpeck's siblings in the Anabaptist family.

Of his writings we will mention here only the tome which he dedicated to the problem of the relation of the Old and New Covenants, the *Testamenterleutterung*. This book of over 800 pages is a concordance listing scripture passages around a variety of themes, all showing how the Old and New Covenant differ, and how the Old Testament points beyond itself to the New and foreshadows the experiences of the New Covenant. It was written sometime after 1544, the exact date unknown. It was published by the Marpeck printing press at Augsburg before May, 1550. This is a major source for our study, although every single book written by Marpeck and almost every letter extant deals with this problem to some extent.¹³

We propose to do three things in this paper: (1) Look at Marpeck's usage of the Old Testament in the framework of the larger Anabaptist usage. (2) Study the ways in which he outlines the relationship between the Old and New Covenants and finally (3) briefly compare Marpeck's position with that of Marcion. From the whole we will allow ourselves a few conclusions for the modern followers of Marpeck.

1. Pilgrim Marpeck's Use of the Old Testament

The Anabaptists were sometimes accused of rejecting the Old Testament as scripture.¹⁴ Because they categorically rejected the circumcision-baptism analogy so important for the retention of infant baptism and because they refused to allow the Old Covenant ethic to attenuate that of the New (compare Luther and Philip's bigamy) it was assumed that the Old Testament was not a part of their Bible. Evidence that any Anabaptist leaders rejected the Old Testament scriptures has yet to be adduced. To be sure, Leonhard Schiemer,¹⁵ and possibly others, cautioned their followers to read primarily the New Testament, but this in itself may already be a reaction to the preoccupation with the Old Testament seen in men like Thomas Müntzer and later the Münsterites.¹⁶ Müntzer picked up the militant strand of the Old Testament while Augustine Bader¹⁷ and the Münsterites succumbed to a fatal biblicism of the Old Testament which had disastrous results. It hardly needs to be pointed out that these aberrant groups have no claim to be considered as Anabaptists, even though the assertion is at times made that their attitude towards the Old Testament is Anabaptist.¹⁸

What then is the Anabaptist attitude towards the Old Testament? It is obvious that it is not uniform. An Anabaptist like John Denck thought it worthwhile enough to translate it from the Hebrew and thus made a significant contribution to the history of

the German Bible. Others felt an affinity to the prophetic strains in the Old Testament. The *Ausbund* and the *Martyr's Mirror* borrow heavily from the narratives of the Old Testament as does also the recently discovered *Codex Geiser*.

The decalogue and the ethics of the Old Testament, form the difficult portions and here there is less unanimity. Early this lack of unanimity comes to the surface by the formation of a group of Anabaptists who were Sabbatarians, led by such an influential man as Oswald Glait. This Sabbatarian party lived on for some time and is strong evidence that a group of Anabaptists took the decalogue so seriously that they tried to keep the one commandment which is set aside by the New Testament church. Marpeck took a bold stand against this Sabbatarian party and insisted that no day of rest must be prescribed to the Christian.¹⁹

One of the striking things about Marpeck's usage of the Old Testament is that he apparently used it as much as the New when the occasion called for it. It is true that in the *Confession*, his first writing, he refers to the New Testament six times as often as to the Old, the ratio in the first part of the *Verantwortung* is 8 to 1, but in the second part it is 3 to 2. In the *Testamentelerleutterung* where it is his studied purpose to discuss the relationships between the two testaments he uses them about equally. Like Irenaeus, Isaiah is his favorite prophet and the book of Leviticus in the Pentateuch. If we may be allowed to step into the New Testament briefly, it may be noted that Marpeck quotes most often from John and Paul, thus the assertion of Robert Friedmann that the Anabaptists lived primarily in the Synoptics and James and not in Paul and John would not hold true of Marpeck.²⁰

For Marpeck the Pentateuch and the Prophets stand out as the major portions of the Old Testament which he uses. In contrast to the *Ausbund* and the Martyr literature which used the narratives and the Psalms, Marpeck used the historical material and the prophetic material. Some of the recurring themes drawn from the Old Testament deserve closer scrutiny.

2. The Old Testament as Preparation

When Marpeck lived in Strasbourg, we find that the second complaint he lodges against the state churches is that the Gospel is preached without any preaching of the law.²¹ In this respect Marpeck shows himself to be a true follower of Luther who also held to the position that one should not preach the Gospel without first proclaiming the condemning law. First the law must reprove sin before the Gospel could come with its healing. The Old Testament accordingly is given a preparatory role. The function of the law in specific is to bring knowledge and conviction of sin. How

can a man come to the Gospel unless he is first convicted by the law?, asks Marpeck.²²

The stress Marpeck lays upon the law must be understood alongside the emphasis he places upon the fall and its consequences. He insisted that knowledge or awareness of sin comes only through the act of committing a sin. Adam's sin caused man to inherit a proclivity or tendency towards sin but this is not considered guilt in the sight of God. Only the exercise of the will results in sin, and the atonement of Christ covers the innocent children and idiots.²³

In this view the awakening of the consciousness of sin becomes an important undertaking which forms the necessary prelude to the acceptance of redemption. Within this context Marpeck defines the role of the law as increasing the sorrows of humanity. While sorrow ruled until the time of Moses, the giving of the law through Moses only increased sorrow and grief because man was only forced back upon an earnest petition to God for help.²⁴ Before the coming of Christ man could not experience full forgiveness of sins and he could only be comforted by using the ceremonies which God had ordained for that purpose.²⁵ The ancients of the Old Testament possessed a proleptic piety, they desired to do good, but their desires were frustrated by their lack of ability to act according to their desires. These desires were as shadows which pointed forward to the light which was coming in Jesus Christ (*Conf.*, 177).

This was also the role played by John the Baptist. John preached repentance, revealed sin to men, and pointed them to Jesus. Marpeck refuses to identify John's baptism with Christian baptism as was the vogue with the Reformers. In reply to Hubmaier's statements of the Anabaptist position Zwingli had argued that there is no difference at all between the two, and that repentance was all that was necessary for Christian baptism. It was argued with fervor that the New Testament knew nothing at all about rebaptism. How did they explain the apparent rebaptism of the disciples in Acts 19? Bucer insisted that since there is no such thing as rebaptism, neither by Christ, who was satisfied with John's baptism, nor by his disciples, the allegedly rebaptized disciples in Acts 19 in actuality did not receive the baptism of John. If they had they would have known about the Holy Spirit, according to Luke 3:16.²⁶

Since it is the nature of the law to increase the knowledge of sin, a corollary of its action is that grace also increases, and takes the upper hand. Consequently the Old Covenant can also be called the "first grace." Affirming the pre-existence of Christ Marpeck does not rule out the activity of Christ in the Old Covenant, but he distinguishes between Christ the pre-existent and Je-

us Christ who appeared in history. Until the coming of the son of God himself no full redemption was possible.²⁷ Christ is the physician who heals those who through the law have been "crushed, broken, and pierced" (zerslagen, zerschnitten, und zerbrochen, *Conf.*, 181).

The Old Covenant can also be called the first birth, in contrast to the other two births in the Old and New Testaments. This first birth brings with it the dead letter in two tablets of stone, signifying the hard demands of God. Honestly looking at himself, man sees that he can never meet the demands, they are too difficult and he cannot keep them. Man is driven to despair and to rely on God's mercy and the only thing that makes the situation bearable is God's promise of Christ. Paul calls this first birth that of servitude (*Conf.*, 186f.)

This stress on the negative preparation of the law for the coming of Christ Marpeck finds in Romans 7, and may have been prompted by his extensive disagreements with Bucer on the place of the Old Testament. It is striking how much emphasis is already placed on the radical difference between Old and New Covenant in the *Confession* of 1532. The same stress is seen also in Marpeck's two other booklets of 1531, but there the trend of the discussion is quite different. There he also emphasized that the disciples did not have the Holy Spirit until after Pentecost, but the use of the Old Testament is extended with the slightly self-conscious explanation that since the opponents use the Old Testament so much he will reply on their terms. The hermeneutical issue was different when dealing with spiritualizers, be they Schwenckfelders or of the Kautz-Bünderlin type (*CV*, a iii recto).

The spiritualizers took the words of II Cor. 3, "The letter kills, but the spirit gives life" and said they applied to any letter, even that of the New Testament. To this both Marpeck and Scharnschlager objected because this would cut the motivating nerve of New Testament preaching. They both applied it exclusively to the Old Testament.²⁸

Furthermore the whole problem of the place of the letter or the law in the New Covenant is involved. Marpeck criticized the Hutterians for using pressure (zwang) to get people to relinquish private property and insists that the New Testament had no law that property ought to be held in common (*TB*, 265).²⁹ As recent discoveries show however, his most serious disagreements on the question of legalism in the Christian life came from the side of the Swiss Brethren. Correspondence has come to light in the last five years which shows clearly that there were deep disagreements between a certain group of Swiss Brethren in the St. Gall-Appenzell area and Marpeck. The Swiss accused Marpeck and his followers of being too free, Marpeck in turn complained that the Swiss con-

gregations were so zealous that they had every leader under the ban, and some of them were under the double ban. What were the concrete issues? Between Maler, a close associate of Marpeck, and the Swiss they were something like this: Is it right to wear or weave bright-colored clothes? Maler said it was all right. The Swiss contended that one should not punish his wife, but Maler felt that this was carrying nonresistance one step too far. A wife is like a child and in need of discipline at times. Maler rejected the Swiss absolutism on not carrying a sword and also felt that marriages ought to be reported to the government.³⁰

For Marpeck the issues were clear. The Christian man is a free man and is bound to Christ and to His community. The greatness of Marpeck is seen in that he refused to become reactionary when he broke with Luther, but tried desperately hard in his own brotherhood to steer a middle course between the libertinism in the Strasbourg Anabaptist Brotherhood and the legalism of the Swiss Brethren. Fortunately Marpeck's clear conception and devotion to Paul's Gospel and the description of the Christian life assisted him in steering this course. He retained church discipline, but it is always clearly redemptive in approach, he practiced controlled communion, but he has none of the marks of the twentieth century moralist Mennonite who is so well portrayed in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican in the Gospels. Was he right in throwing the law out of court as far as the Christian life is concerned? On the basis of Paul, one can only say Yes. Our past four hundred years should also have shown us that the answer which he gave should not be ignored, even though it is admittedly the easiest thing to slip back into the comfortable routine of legalism and thus deny one's Sonship. Marpeck's ideal of the Christian life where the Christian is guided not by any legalistic Biblicism but by the Spirit working through the body of believers in the church may be a more dangerous ethical ideal—but no one has yet shown on the basis of the New Testament that this is not precisely what Paul was describing.

For Marpeck the law had a provisional preparatory role, once you are in Christ the law is gone, and the Christian is driven on by the Spirit. This is one of the favorite images used by Marpeck—the driving of the Spirit. To keep this from degenerating into any subjective individualism, Marpeck insisted that each motive, each drive of the Spirit, be shared in the community of the Spirit where it would receive correction and purification. Those who did not subject themselves to this because of pride or other deficiency were disciplined as the case of Helene von Freyberg clearly shows (*KB*, #28).

3. The Old Testament as Promise

Not only is the Old Testament seen as preparation for the coming of Christ but it is also seen as promise for what is to follow. One basic objection that Marpeck had against the view of the Old Testament taken by Bucer and Schwenckfeld was that they identified promise and realization, prophecy and fulfillment. The law and the prophets testified to the forgiveness in Christ, but this witness does not indicate that they had already possessed this salvation (V II, 400:3f.). Promise and realization are not to be identified, for possession comes only with the time (mit der zeit, V II, 332:10). Marpeck draws an analogy with the promises of the Old and those of the New. We believe in the Resurrection and know that it will take place in the future, but do not say that it has already taken place (V II, 400). This stress on the future is seen at a number of places where Marpeck discusses the Old Testament (*Conf.*, 174, *TE*, et. *passim*). While Marpeck admits that there is an element of comparison between circumcision and baptism, the differences are so great that the similarity becomes meaningless. The old rite was only a promise and a prophecy of what was to come (*Conf.*, 175). The figurative witnesses of the good deeds of the ancients and their piety pointed forward to Christ, as a shadow to the light (*Conf.*, 177).

According to Marpeck a clear difference must be made between promise and fulfillment. The innocent child's sin is taken away by Christ's word of promise, but this word of promise is not to be identified with faith itself (*Conf.*, 184). The saints of the Old Covenant are called children of the covenant of promise but not a syllable of the Old Testament indicates that they were children of God in the same way that those under the New Covenant are (*Conf.*, 185f.). All of the Old Testament scriptures are seen as pointing forward to Christ, they find their fulfillment in the New Covenant. The parable of the scribe and his treasure chest in the Gospel of Matthew is applied by Marpeck to Christ. The treasure chest is the Scriptures, written by Christ himself, and which through all the patriarchs, law and prophets point to Christ (*KB*, fol. 284b.).

Marpeck's contemporaries took exception not to these ways of defining the relationship of the Old and New Testaments, but to the way in which he overstated the difference. Bucer repeatedly insisted that the Old and New Covenants are "idem in substantia" and the thorough study by Hans Heinrich Wolf on Calvin has shown that Calvin's position is virtually the same. Peter Martyr, another influential Strasbourg reformer as well as Melancthon came to the same conclusions.³¹ Deriving his cue from Zwingli, Bullinger wrote a book on the subject in 1534 defending at length the thesis that there is no difference between the Covenants, in

fact there is only one covenant; the difference resides merely in the administration of God.

Marpeck objected to these formulations because they obscured what was centrally important for him, namely the incarnation of Christ. If the Old Testament saints were truly no different from the church of the New Testament, then it seemed to him that the incarnation was merely a puppet show. If the Holy Spirit were already active in the same way under the Old Covenant as he was under the New, then John must have been mistaken when he said that the Holy Spirit was not yet, for Christ had not yet been glorified. His fundamental objection to these positions was that it did not take history seriously. He refused to say, as did Peter Martyr that the parts of scripture were not new and old but rather law and Gospel, distinct not historically, but theologically.³² Marpeck insisted that history be taken seriously. Before Christ's coming things were simply different. That in the sight of God Abraham was considered as righteous as any New Testament Christian Marpeck would not for a moment deny. But to call Abraham a Christian and to consider normative for the Christian the standards of the Old Testament was one of the greatest insults to the incarnation of Christ Marpeck could imagine.

Defining the differences, Marpeck repeatedly used the term: "wesentlich." This term is taken from the German translation of the Bible (Col. 2:17 and Heb. 10:1) and has no Platonic connotation. Its meaning is simply defined as Christ (*TE*, Preface). The difference between the Old and New Covenants consists of Christ. In contrast Calvin insisted that only the form and not the essence of the Old Covenant was set aside in Christ.³³

Perhaps the most serious hermeneutical problem with respect to the Old Testament is the question of allegory or typology. How does one extract from the imagery of the Bible its contents using methods which have certain built-in safeguards within them? Luther arrived at the standard: "was Christus treibet," and this is followed in large measure by Caspar Schwenckfeld, Marpeck's most vocal critic. The problem is that with this criterion it soon becomes the major task of the exegete to find Christ everywhere in the Old Testament, as we have seen it in our day in the works of Wilhelm Vischer. When the exegete begins with his own preconceived notion of Christ as Luther did, then certain books like the Apocalypse can be judged unfit for the Christian canon. In the Old Testament Luther has by no means broken with allegory, regardless of how loudly his fondest defenders may proclaim it.³⁴ Nor has Calvin done so, although he made considerably more headway in this regard than did Luther.

Marpeck used allegory, where he felt that the source material (like Song of Solomon, the Hagar story) justified it, but shows such

a keen interest in the historical books of the Old Testament that he finds hardly any time at all for allegory. This is the more striking when it is recalled that as he entered Strasbourg in 1528, Bänderlin, a strong outspoken opponent to Antiochian methods of exegesis and an advocate of allegory was actively leading the Anabaptists. Soon thereafter Melchior Hofmann began his activity in Strasbourg and again we have a hermeneutical type which is far from the sane methods used by Marpeck.³⁵ In spite of the fact that Marpeck knew no Latin, Greek or Hebrew he had a fine sense for historical exegesis. This historical sense comes out clearly when he deletes certain typological phrases from a book of Rothmann that he took over and published as a confessional manual for his group. Equally clearly it can be observed when certain statements which minimize the differences between the Old and New Testaments in the writings of Hans Hut or Schiemer are either deleted or revised in the recension of the Marpeck group.

Marpeck stressed the discontinuity between the two Covenants rather than the continuity. It should be observed however that he was almost forced to do so. The Reformers read the New Testament back into the Old while the Anabaptists themselves were always in danger of dragging the law back in through the back door. Fighting on both of these fronts and seeing the tragic results of a fanatic devotion to the Old Testament at Münster, Marpeck resigned himself to a usage of the Old Testament which placed high value on the devotional value of the Songs of Solomon. (Here he is following the great mystics, notably Bernard of Clairvaux; although Origen, Ambrose and many other commentators exegeted the Songs.). For Marpeck in contrast to the mystics the bride was always the church; never the individual.³⁶ For this and other reasons he does not belong among the mystics.

Did Marpeck overemphasize the difference between the Old and New Testaments? Undoubtedly. We do not accept his statements today and we have every right to criticize Marpeck for stressing so much the difference between Abraham and the Christian that he fails to adequately note that the element that ties them together is faith-obedience—a good Pauline point. He allowed his opponents to force him too far in making assertions about the salvation of the patriarchs and I am sure that there are few modern Mennonites who will follow him in the devious paths taken to get himself off that exegetical hook!

4. Marpeck and Marcion

But let us pose the final question: Was he Marcionite? I suppose it depends a good deal on what we mean by Marcionite. I take it that what is bad about Marcion is not only his aversion to the Old Testament (for then there are many Marcionites among Men-

nonites!) but basically his cleavage of the Godhead into an angry and a compassionate God. Of this there are only slight traces in Marpeck.³⁷ This is the more impressive because there are numerous Marcionite strains in Marpeck. Take the incident on the way to Jerusalem where Jesus refuses to have fire come down from heaven on the Samaritans; a passage which Marpeck loved to quote and so did Marcion. (Indeed one of the firmest textual supports for Jesus' reply: "Know ye not what spirit ye are" comes from no other hand than that of Marcion.)

Another just as striking is the assertion by Marcion that Jesus did not merely go to Hades to proclaim His victory over death, but actually to proclaim forgiveness and offer salvation to the patriarchs.³⁸ Between Marpeck and Schwenckfeld this was a recurring cause for contention, Marpeck maintaining that Jesus actually gave salvation to the patriarchs at that time while Caspar Schwenckfeld argued that Jesus merely announced His victory to them then.³⁹ The publication of several editions of the Gospel of Nicodemus in German in Augsburg in 1525ff. would lead one to suspect that some Anabaptists, and Marpeck may surely have been among them, read this booklet and thereby were sped on their way to reflect, not too productively to be sure, on how Christ spent the three days between His death and His resurrection. If Marpeck is to be accused of being Marcionite *in tendency*, this would be a difficult charge to rebut, and possibly the best one could do would be to take refuge in the comfort that Martin Luther too has been accused of this.⁴⁰

One point at which Marpeck is not Marcionite is in his view of history and human development. While Marcion and Schwenckfeld, Bänderlin and Bucer (and even some of the Reformers) but especially Franck made much of the fact that humanity had not been ready in the Old Testament for the New, it was still too childish, now we are ready to move beyond the infantile stages of the Old; Marpeck never accepted this position. He insisted that God's manner of dealing with man in history is determined by his sovereignty and not by man's progressive evolution. One needs only think of Harnack's Neomarcionitism to see that this position has considerable relevance for today. According to Marpeck we return again and again to the Old Testament and we never say that we have grown beyond using it, because it forms an organic part of God's whole dealing with mankind.

5. Conclusions

Finally what relevance does this have for modern Mennonitism? H. Richard Niebuhr has recently made the statement that "The relationship of the Old Testament to the New is a central issue in biblical studies, and in the interpretation of the nature of Chris-

tianity."⁴¹ This observation is in my opinion correct. The study by H. H. Wolf on the relationship of the Old and New Testaments in Calvin freely admits that Calvin's view may have only slight relevance for today because the answers may not be correct, even if the correct questions are posed.⁴² We must be willing to admit this also with the Anabaptists.

In Marpeck's case however, I am increasingly convinced that apart from his exaggerations his main point stands. Eichrodt makes the covenant central in his view of the Old Testament—so did Marpeck. Promise and fulfillment is seen as the cord which unites the New and the Old Covenants by Baumgärtel—it was already that for Marpeck. Details may vary, but the basic agreement is there.

We ought to strive for a measure of consistency in our dealing with the Old Testament. Calvin, while he argued for virtual identification, refused to allow the women to adorn themselves with jewels just because Rebecca did.⁴³ We as Mennonites claim to live beyond the Old Testament, but when it suits our church expansion and our conference budget we get all excited about the tithe; which has, as far as I can tell, nothing to do with the New Testament.

We have other problems as well. Our Christian education people tell us that we dare not tell the story of David and Goliath to children of certain age levels—I wonder about that. Where do we draw the line even when we fully agree that they have a valid point pedagogically? There are problems a plenty in writing Old Testament Sunday school materials for adults and we are fortunate that there are a number of able men who are doing doctoral work in the field of Old Testament. Somehow we ought to convey to them that their field is every bit as important as Anabaptist history or theology.

One final word. I agree with Kiwiet that in spite of the fact that Marpeck was not a learned theologian (perhaps because of it) he appears to be much closer to the Hebraic thought-forms of the Bible than many of the major Reformers who were bound to Aristotelian patterns of thought.⁴⁴ Schwenckfeld is quite clearly tied to Neoplatonism, which he has received from Augustine.⁴⁵ If this is the case then we have no reason at all to apologize for Marpeck's attitude towards the two covenants, instead he ought to be credited with looking above the shoulders of his contemporaries and spotting some truths which are "discovered" today by diligent Biblical scholars. The last question we will always pose: Does Marpeck's view of the relationship of the Old and New Covenants harmonize with that found in the Bible? The answer is clearly not an unqualified Yes.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹The most sympathetic and thorough study of Marcion is the work of Adolf Harnack, *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott* (Leipzig, 1921). For citations on the above-mentioned points see page 105.
- ²Robert M. Grant, *The Letter and the Spirit* (London, 1957) has convincingly shown to what extent Biblical studies are here indebted (via Philo) to the classical Greek writers.
- ³Devreese has probably done most to restore interest and appreciation for the work of Theodore of Mopsuestia, although the earlier work by Heinrich Kihn, *Theodor von Mopsuestia und Junilius Africanus als Exegeten* (Freiburg i.B., Herder, 1880) is unsurpassed in the area of hermeneutics. F. A. Sullivan in a recent study, *The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Rome, 1956) declines to give him a clean bill of health.
- ⁴John Lawson, *The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus* (London, 1948)
- ⁵On the hermeneutics of Augustine see Gerhard Strauss, *Schriftgebrauch, Schriftauslegung und Schriftbeweis bei Augustin* (Tübingen, 1959) p. 68 where Pontet is cited as designating the problem of the inner connection of the two testaments as "le plus grave probleme de la Bible" for Augustine.
- ⁶The myth that the Middle ages were the dark ages for Bible study is effectively exploded by Beryl Smalley in her book, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1952).
- ⁷H. J. Kraus, *Geschichte der historisch-kritischen Forschung des Alten Testaments* (Neukirchen Kreis Moers, 1956) p. 9.
- ⁸To my knowledge James D. Wood, *The Interpretation of the Bible* (London, 1958) pp. 99-101 is the first to include the Anabaptists in a history of hermeneutics as giving a positive contribution, although he mentions only Denck and Hubmaier.
- ⁹*Op. cit.* p. 248.
- ¹⁰Gordon Rupp, "Word and Spirit in the First Years of the Reformation," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 49 (1958) p. 16. Likewise considerable research has resulted in a lack of unanimity on the origins of the covenant idea itself. Gottlob Schrenk first asserted that Zwingli's covenant theology received its impetus from the Anabaptists (*Gottesreich und Bund*, [Gütersloh, 1923] p. 36) and this was accepted by Walter Hollweg in his informative essay, "Bernhard Buwo, ein ostfriesischer Theologe aus dem Reformationsjahrhundert," in *Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst und vaterländische Altertümer zu Emden* vol. 33 (1953), 71-90 (This last reference suggested by Cornelius Krahn). L. J. Trinterud, "The Origins of Puritanism," *Church History*, XX (1950), 37-57 would seek its origin outside of Anabaptism.
- ¹¹A good description of his life and writings can be found in *Mennonite Encyclopedia* III, 491-502.
- ¹²*MQR* vol. XXXIII (1959) "Pilgram Marpeck's Two Books of 1531" pp. 18-30.
- ¹³See ME *sub voce* for full bibliographical details. Abbreviations are as follows: *Confession*: Conf.; *Clare verantwortung*: CV; *Klarer unterricht*: KU; *Vermanung*: TB; *Verantwortung*: V; *Testamentenleutering*: TE *Kunstbuch*: KB.
- ¹⁴So Caspar Schwenckfeld, *Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum* (hereafter CS) VIII, 221: 10f.; X (February 27, 1547), 925.
- ¹⁵Lydia Müller, *Glaubenszeugnisse* I, 45. According to the testimony of Hans Leupold the Anabaptists in Augsburg about 1527 when they gathered studied the word of God, principally the Gospels and the prophets. (See ME III, 328.)

- ¹⁶See Heinrich Gresbeck's report in C. A. Cornelius, *Berichte der Augenszeugen über das münsterische Wiedertäuferreich* (Münster, 1853): "Wan et aver middagh was, dat sie setten und etten, so stunt dair ein iungh und las ein capittel uth dat olde testament oft uth den propheten" (p. 34ff.) Cornelius (p. 59f.) cites evidence that polygamy was justified at Münster on the basis of Genesis 1:28.
- ¹⁷See ME I, 209ff.
- ¹⁸G. Uhlhorn, *Urbanus Rhegius* (1861) p. 108. Jakob Andrea in his *Drey und dreissig Predigen von den furnembsten Spaltungen in der christlichen Religion* . . . (Tübingen, 1568) asserts that the Anabaptists do not accept the Old Testament because their errors can be too easily refuted from the OT (IV, 102) although earlier he has accused them of explaining the essentials of Christian piety from the Ten Commandments rather than from the Christian faith (p. 20).
- ¹⁹See "Sabbatarian Anabaptists" in ME IV.
- ²⁰"Conception of the Anabaptists," *Church History* IX (1940) p. 360f.
- ²¹*Strasbourg Täuferakten*, being edited by Manfred Krebs and Jean Rott, p. 352:41: "Der ander jrthum, dass sie das evangelion (p. 353) vor dem gesatz geprediget haben, so doch niemans zum evangelion kumt, er erkenn vor und ee durchs gesatz sein sündt. Wie dann Johann baptista die buss gepredigt."
- ²²On Luther see Wilfried Joest, *Gesetz und Freiheit* (Göttingen, 1956²) and on Marpeck, Krebs-Rott, *op. cit.* as well as Conf. 171 where the importance of the knowledge of sin is stressed.
- ²³According to John Lawson, (*op. cit.* 216ff.) this view was already held by Irenaeus.
- ²⁴Conf. 177, where the original reads: "Dann es ist die ursach aines hertzlichen gepets zu got umb hilff" and the statement on page 181: "The law along with John is past, which brought only sorrow and tribulation, according to God's command."
- ²⁵Conf. 187.
- ²⁶Conf. 181. On Zwingli see ZSW IV, 238ff.; 258ff. Bucer, Krebs-Rott, *op. cit.* p. 27. For an interesting but questionable way out of this problem see Markus Barth, "Baptism and Evangelism," *Scottish Journal of Theology* Vol. 12 (1959) p. 36f. Barth asserts "Christian baptism after the resurrection is essentially identical with John's baptism (Acts 2:28; 19:4-5; in the last passage the end quotation marks belong after verse 5, not verse 4)."
- ²⁷Conf. 178f. The law and the prophets are called the first grace in KB fol. 285b. Marpeck appears to be indebted to Leonhard Schiemer here, cf. Lydia Müller, *Glaubenszeugnisse* I, p. 60f.
- ²⁸V. II, 519. For Scharnslager in particular see his "Sendschreiben an die Brüder in Mähren," which must have been written after the second part of the *Verantwortung*, published in *Menn. Geschichtsblätter* IV (1939), 10-12, where he makes the statement: "Den wer nicht durch (das Alte Testament) getödet wird, der kann durch das Amt des Neuen Testaments nicht zum Leben kommen" (p. 11). Maler (KB fol. 152b) a member of the Marpeck Brotherhood rejects this interpretation as does also Peter Riedemann, *Confession* p. 66 and Ulrich Stadler, *Glaubenszeugnisse* 215. Marpeck may have been aware that this verse was the motto of the allegorists (see James Wood, *op. cit.* p. 90). On Luther and Calvin see H. H. Wolf, *Die Einheit des Bundes. Das Verhältnis von Altem und Neuem Testament bei Calvin* (Neukirchen Kreis Moers, 1958) p. 46. For extensive documentation that it should be applied only to the Old Testament see G. Schrenk, Kittel's *TWNT* I, 764ff.
- ²⁹Scharnslager calls it a "gesetz, drang und strick" (KB 223).

- ³⁰In his correspondence with the Swiss Marpeck discusses the place of the law and the Ten Commandments at length. He is disturbed that they will not extend communion fellowship to him and one of his bitterest complaints against them was their refusal to give him a clear testimony, either that he was wrong, or that he was right. To him their disdain for epistolary exchange smacked of spiritualism. Scharnschläger makes an even more basic criticism of the Swiss: To him it seemed as though the Swiss were substituting a works righteousness for the righteousness which comes alone through Christ (See KB 255b).
- ³¹On Calvin see his *Institutes* Book II, Chapters X and XI, and Wolf, *op. cit.* p. 116: "eadem doctrina, vera fidei unitas, fiducia unius meditatoris invocatio Dei, patris, gubernatio eodem spiritu, Discrimen non in substantia, sed in accidentibus." On Peter Martyr, see Joseph C. McClelland, *The Visible Words of God* (Grand Rapids, 1957), p. 87ff. and on Melancthon, Hansjörg Sick, *Melancthon als Ausleger des Alten Testaments* (Tübingen, 1959), p. 56f.
- ³²J. C. McClelland, *op. cit.* p. 87. Stadler in the work cited above takes the same position.
- ³³Wolf, *op. cit.* p. 146.
- ³⁴This is recognized by Hans-Joachim Kraus when he quotes a statement from Calvin which shows "dass Luther in der Praxis seiner Auslegungen die Konsequenz jener hermeneutischen Regeln vermissen lässt, die er selbst aufgestellt und immer wieder betont hat" (*op. cit.* p. 13).
- ³⁵As ably shown by Peter Kawerau, *Melchior Hofmann als religiöser Denker* (Harlem, 1954).
- ³⁶Schwenckfeld (CS VII, 442; IV, 134) belongs in the camp of the mystics according to this criterion. James Denney says correctly: "Though Christ is sometimes spoken of as the husband or bridegroom of the Church there is no Scripture authority for using this metaphor of His relation to the individual soul" (*Expositor's Greek New Testament* II, 638).
- ³⁷When, for example, he says in allegorizing the second chapter of the Song of Solomon: "(before Christ) the sun of the Father shone upon mankind as upon a parched earth through wrath with righteousness of the law. Therefore no fruit was found among men because of the heat and wrath of the Father." Then Christ came in the flesh "... however, still before the going down of the sun, Jesus Christ, mankind was still without fruit, but the abating of the heat of the day came about through the cooling off of the wrath of the Father" (KB fol. 12b). The absence of any extensive stress on God's nature being different in the Old Testament from the New would lead us to be cautious. Marpeck at times allows his style to get away from him, as e.g. when he explicitly says: "for the law of revenge was given through Moses, grace and truth came to us through Christ" (KB #18).
- ³⁸Harnack, *op. cit.* 169ff.
- ³⁹For Marpeck's position, see KB 323; V. 265f.
- ⁴⁰Emil G. Kraeling, *The Old Testament Since the Reformation* (London, 1955) p. 70.
- ⁴¹*The Advancement of Theological Education* (New York, 1957) p. 70.
- ⁴²*Op. cit.* p. 7.
- ⁴³*Op. cit.* p. 146.
- ⁴⁴J. J. Kiwiet, *Pilgram Marpeck* (Kassel, 1957) p. 149f.
- ⁴⁵It is not without significance for the course of the Reformation that Augustine's *The Spirit and the Letter* was republished in the early sixteenth century (see Gordon Rupp, *op. cit.* p. 16).

THE ANABAPTIST INFLUENCE ON AMERICAN RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

Irvin B. Horst

Introduction

Religious thought in Colonial America was largely Protestant, an overseas extension of the views and outlook of the Protestant Reformers, particularly those of England. Whether one considers the Puritan theocracy of Governor Winthrop, the non-conformism of Roger Williams, or the Quaker experiment in Pennsylvania, "the errand into the Wilderness" was justified in terms of refounding the Church free from Popish rites and Laudian compromise. It was, in other words, an effort to complete the Reformation. In Virginia, also, as Perry Miller has shown, the early literature of the colony "exhibits a set of principles for guiding not a mercantile investment but a medieval pilgrimage."¹

The secular motives which we know about so well from our school texts complete the picture, but they were hardly uppermost. In a movement so close to the Middle Ages and part and parcel of the Reformation, religion was all-embracing and central for thought as well as action. In point of time one does well to recall that although 1648 marked the close of the Religious Wars on the Continent and the relative stabilization of the confessional map there, in England the Puritan movement had by this date entered a climacteric and it was not until the coming of the Glorious Revolution and the Toleration Act of 1689 that the issues were resolved.

One may hardly speak of the Protestant Reformation in America, for the object of reformation was not present, although the colonists were aware of the presence of Catholicism in the Spanish possessions and the possible encroachment of the French in Canada. Even Anglicanism as it was established in Virginia was not a foil; it too inclined towards a Puritanism of the non-separating kind. For the Puritans, America was the grand circumstance thrust upon them to fulfill the vision of the Reformation; it was the new Canaan into which God had called the true Church. In the Providence of God, a later historian said, the settlement of America was delayed until the Reformation had come in order that the new country might be free from Popish superstition.²

A study of early American religious thought then begins with

a study of Reformation thought, particularly that of England. The subject of this paper was given to me no doubt because my thesis work pertained to the English Reformation. However, as it is the nature of theses to be highly specialized, my work was limited to nonconformism during the early English Reformation period, that is, to the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI. Puritanism as you know came later, during the reign of Elizabeth, and the American colonies were not opened until the time of the Stuarts in the 17th century. With the sources of this later period I have less acquaintance. What can be done here possibly is to raise some problems of historiography which both periods have in common and share with you a clue or two in regard to the American scene which may or may not be worth running down. Running down clues to answer historical problems is main business for many of you, so that I am indeed fortunate to have the opportunity to read this paper and open the subject for discussion before an experienced and sympathetic group of scholars in the field of Anabaptist history.

As has been intimated we are here concerned chiefly with the possible influence of Anabaptism on American thought during the Colonial Period, particularly in relation to Puritanism in the broad sense. Puritanism is the right place to begin not only from the point of time, but it was and has been also a main current of thought and way of life in America. It is to be noted, too, that Anabaptism, particularly of the English type, was still a creative force throughout the 17th century. About the second great movement in American religious thought, namely Evangelicalism during the 18th and 19th centuries, we shall have little to say. By this time English Anabaptism is no longer distinguishable from other traditions which went into the general outlook of the free churches or denominations in America—unless one considers the Baptist bodies as perpetuating the Anabaptist tradition. As for the Anabaptist-Mennonite bodies of European origin, they were completely withdrawn from American society during this period and with the exception of isolated individuals made little or no impact upon American thought. More recently Mennonites have begun to impinge upon the thinking of the larger society around them, but this is not a subject which can be treated in this paper.

May one on solid historical grounds isolate the Anabaptist factor in the American scene? It has not been done for England and many would question the validity of any such undertaking. Anabaptism west of the Atlantic, if not in England, may be too much compromised and a part of other movements and without a clear identity. There is also the question why it should be isolated, particularly if one has to dissect other historical

entities to accomplish it. The process will be all the more suspect in the hands of an ingroup researcher. On the other hand, we know today that the Anabaptism movement was a major expression of religious life and thought in the 16th and 17th centuries and that it requires major consideration in any careful study of the Reformation and its influences. However, the danger of stressing the unique at the expense of the larger movement is a very real one. We do well to be aware of this tension and to reckon with undue pull in any one direction.

I. Definition and Typology

The Anabaptist research which has flourished so fruitfully in contemporary Reformation studies in regard to the Continent does not have a counterpart in regard to England. It may be said, in fact, that the term "Anabaptist" is hardly a working concept in current English Reformation studies. This is true in spite of the fact that the name occurs frequently in the primary sources of the period, possibly as frequently as in Continental sources. In the index volume of the Parker Society texts, for example, one finds three columns of references under "Anabaptists."³ The subject is avoided, one has the impression, by careful historians. As is the case on the Continent, most of the extant sources are from the hands of the enemies of the movement, and are full not only of vilifying aspersions but interpreted so variously as to discourage the most astute of historians in forming a clear opinion.

What concepts then are employed in contemporary studies of the English Reformation? The older typology which applied "dissenter" to the separating groups—Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists—and "Puritans" to nonseparating reform within the Anglican Church has completely broken down in the light of recent research. Rightly so. The reformers who came to England, for example, were not for the most part dissenters in the sense of separatists, although by default of the mother church they did become the Congregationalists; they were committed to the pattern of a uniform authoritarian state church, the medieval pattern as perpetuated by the Protestant state churches on the Continent. Presbyterians too were a national church but not recognized in England.

The "Puritan" typology as employed today includes both separating and nonseparating groups. Perry Miller and W. K. Jordan restrict it to the more orthodox branches, that is to Presbyterianism in England and Congregationalism in New England. Miller does not deny the more radical elements as Puritan but he has no interest in them; his study of Roger Williams is an exception which we shall note later. Puritanism for Miller is

historically Center and theologically Right. Other historians, such as A. S. P. Woodhouse, William Haller, and Winthrop Hudson, extend Puritanism through the center and left of the movement to include the Congregationalists in England and the Baptists but stop short of the Quakers. Alan Simpson, however, can explain why this line should be crossed: "I can see little reason for excluding the Quakers. An enterprise which began in the sixteenth century by exhorting men to prepare themselves for a miracle of grace and ended by asserting the presence of the Holy Spirit is one movement."⁴ The studies of Geoffrey F. Nuttall, particularly in his book, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, appear to sustain this view.⁵

In this typology Anabaptism receives a place in the left wing of Puritanism. The more radical groups, however, are currently left unstudied by church historians with the general swing in our time to the theological right and a greater interest in religious continuity and tradition as over against radical change and revolt. Even the churches which owe considerable to English Anabaptism—Quakers, Baptists, and Congregationalists—are currently searching their own backgrounds for connections with the right wing of Puritanism.⁶ However, one may not overlook the older Baptist and Quaker histories where a concept of "Anabaptism" anticipates in some respects the new Anabaptist studies of the Reformation on the Continent. These works represent spiritual perception and an oral tradition which may have been handed down from the 16th and 17th centuries, but they lack documentation and objective treatment of the kind which would recommend them to the attention of modern scholars.

The task of establishing a working definition of English Anabaptism is basic. Until this is done we remain at an impasse in this field of studies. At this point one might be inclined to bring the results of the studies of the Continental Reformation to bear on the English scene. It is somewhat disconcerting in terms of professional scholarship to find that English and American scholars who work in this field know so little about the recent studies in the Anabaptist movement in central and northwest Europe. Might this typology which has been used with such remarkable results for Switzerland and Germany be brought to bear on England?

This typology has been made a useful instrument with various modifications by Harold S. Bender, Robert Friedmann, and more recently by George H. Williams.⁷ It owes its inspiration to the perceptive study and insights of Ernst Troeltsch in which a distinction is drawn between *Kirche* and *Gruppe* in the history of the Christian Church. It may be that this distinction is most helpful for a study of Anabaptism in central Europe, at least

the late W. J. Kühler, professor at the University of Amsterdam, claimed that it was too rigid and arbitrary for an understanding of the movement in the Netherlands.⁸ For England, too, it is useful only with certain modifications. One might even raise the question as to whether the main thrust of Anabaptism in the Netherlands and in England was truly sectarian. In the Netherlands, for example, there were many more nonseparating than separating Anabaptists. This can be documented from a number of sources, including the writings of Menno Simons, the followers of whom for the most part took a sectarian position, but this was not the original vision of their leader. One can also document it from the records of the Dutch refugee churches in England and at Emden which were officially Reformed but included a considerable number of Anabaptists. In the northern part of the Netherlands Anabaptism represented a dominant movement during the second quarter of the 16th century, but by the 1560's the larger number accepted a modified type of Calvinism and entered the Reformed Church.

In England during the early Reformation period Anabaptism bears some resemblance to Lollardy, if indeed it is not related to it. While it had some tendencies towards separation it remained on the whole, like Lollardy, nonseparating. The student of the movement in these areas must consider carefully the distinction between a generic and a specific use of the term and he cannot overlook the intrinsic meaning of the term, but he has to begin with the contemporary documents and hold in abeyance any theory of interpretation until he has completed the basic research. Having assembled the available data the student then finds himself in a strait between the secular historians, who interpret the movement broadly, and the church historians, who for the most part give us a picture within sectarian boundaries. A study of Anabaptism in the Netherlands and in England suggests a movement of wide proportions. It was in these areas that the movement was permitted its fullest development and its greatest successes. While it was suppressed in Germany and in central Europe as a whole, in England, to quote Roland Bainton, it "gained a permanent foothold and did even more than the established church to fashion the temper of England and America."⁹

One is required nonetheless to fashion a definition of Anabaptism for the English scene. How can this be done? Certainly not out of theoretical considerations alone, nor can the answers given for the Continental scene be taken over without criticism, although they doubtless will prove an invaluable aid. The most reliable answer will come only after the long, hard work of a series of area and period studies in the contemporary documents.

Maybe we are stalemated in regard to approach rather than in regard to definition. If we consider the Anabaptists a third party in the English Reformation, antedating and distinct from Puritanism in a strict sense, we shall arrive at some more satisfactory answers. Imagine what the Continental picture of the Reformation would be like if Anabaptism was considered an integral part of the Reformed wing. One has to consider the possibility that the English picture is entirely different. It is at least worth trying, and the historian has to reconcile himself to the risk of fruitless study.

In this section we have considered the problem of defining "Anabaptism" in the context of English and American religious thought. We might find it difficult to define the second member of our subject, namely "American religious thought." None of us doubt the existence of this member as an historical entity. However there are many Americans—and more Europeans—who doubt the independence and originality of American religious thought. American thought is considered contingent on European thought; in the past as well as in the present, we are told, all theological pace-setting is done in Europe. Even this description, however one may be inclined to modify it, provides some lines of demarcation which the historian may use to define his subject. It is not our intention here, however, to define this second member, as interesting as it might be. The problem is chiefly one of perspective on recent and highly diverse historical phenomena. We may note in passing a few quotations from several authorities in order to sharpen up the two concepts we are relating to each other in this paper.

"Protestantism in America," according to Dean Brauer, "can be characterized in terms of a full, free experimentation and an enduring Biblicism." Most American Christians, he says, would characterize their religious faith as "evangelical."¹⁰ Willard L. Sperry speaks of American Christians as believing in the separation of church and state, individualistic in way of life and optimistic in outlook.¹¹ Martin Marty in *A Short History of Christianity*—just off the press—says "the real genius of American thought has been seen in its pragmatic adjustments to the problems and possibilities of a new world."¹² It may well be said that American religious life is characterized more by action than by thought. Possibly the title of this paper should be: "The Anabaptist Influence on American Action." The typical American Christian can hardly conceive of the church unless it is a church in action. John Wesley once said, "I believe the merciful God regards the lives and tempers of men more than their ideas."¹³ No wonder Methodism was so acceptable on the American frontier. Here is both strength and weakness of the

kind which has characterized Anabaptism in particular and the free church tradition in general. For our purposes here, one should note the striking similarity between certain aspects of typical Protestantism in America and the Anabaptist pattern of thought and life. In America the free church tradition has become the dominant one with its nonliturgical forms of worship, independence in church order, and a Biblical theology.

II. Methodology

In this paper we are concerned primarily with relationships on the level of thought, with the interaction of ideas, where the thinking of one group influences that of another. This kind of study requires the use of a discipline known in historical studies as intellectual history, or in specialized form as the history of ideas. In order to avoid misunderstanding we want to be clear that here we do not have in mind what the Germans call *Geistesgeschichte* but rather the study of basic recurring ideas such as Perry Miller has done in *The New England Mind* or the genre of research begun by Arthur O. Lovejoy in his *The Great Chain of Being* and promoted on a high scholarly level in *The Journal of the History of Ideas*.¹⁴ The work of Perry Miller in the field of Puritanism is particularly apropos because it suggests some parallels in Anabaptism.

This discipline commends itself here not only because the subject of this paper has to do with movements of thought but also because it may suggest some fresh categories of interpretation in the field of Anabaptist studies. This is not to discount in any respect the major place we give to the history of events (*Ereignisgeschichte*), although a single approach may easily reach the point of diminishing returns. We are beginning to see too the limitations of a methodology which is indebted to the natural sciences. The two approaches supplement rather than contradict each other.

An illustration may help to clarify what we mean by the history of ideas. The first section of Perry Miller's book, *The New England Mind*, is titled "The Augustinian Strain of Piety." The thesis here is pretty much the view that the Puritans like Augustine saw no opposition between the spirit of religion and the letter of theology. Miller is much impressed with the fact that the Puritans like Augustine possessed both a formal theology and a highly subjective piety. The fact that Augustine lived in a Latin culture and the Puritans in an Anglo-Saxon one with more than a thousand years intervening is of interest to Miller but he is not concerned to work out the genetic connections (he admits they might conceivably be worked out). The corpus of the ideas of the two subjects compared as well as their com-

mon spirit suggests a wholeness and a universality which is convincing. Furthermore it contains a value judgment. It is this kind of study which has brought a revival of interest in Puritanism and at the same time established great respect for the Puritan tradition.

One may easily be misunderstood. To avoid a wrong impression about the work of Perry Miller his book, *The New England Mind*, should be read and studied as a whole. The whole discipline may be studied in the books of Arthur O. Lovejoy as published by Harvard and Johns Hopkins.

Towards the end of the 19th century the German archivist-historian, Ludwig Keller, compared the ideas of the Anabaptists with those of the Waldenses and various spiritualistic groups in the Middle Ages. In his writings, it appears, he was chiefly interested in the common spirit or genius of these groups. Hence his work may be classed as *Geistesgeschichte* rather than history of ideas. One should not however that the writings of Keller created a favorable reconsideration of Anabaptism on the part of highly educated people, and this not only on romantic and sentimental grounds.

In the Netherlands a related example is found in the case of W. J. Kühler's views about the relationship of the Brethren of the Common Life of the 14th century and the Anabaptists of the 16th century. Kühler's scholarship was more impressive than Keller's, but he did not succeed in establishing a direct or genetic connection between the two groups. His case rests chiefly on the similarity of the ideas and piety of the two groups. Both Kühler and Keller were interested in continuity of events, for they lived during the period when scientific history was in its heyday. The work of both these men is of great value quite apart from the straining to establish connections between various movements in history.

In more recent Anabaptist studies we find two examples of the history of ideas approach. Franklin Littell in *The Anabaptist View of the Church* has devoted an entire chapter to the idea of the fall of the church as representative of a pattern of religious primitivism in the Anabaptist movement¹⁵. The treatment is a most perceptive consideration and is actually the first time, as far as the writer of this paper knows, a serious effort has been made to use history of ideas in the field of Anabaptist studies. George H. Williams of the Harvard Divinity School also used this approach in his Menno Simons Lectures at Bethel College in 1958. Williams traces the wilderness and paradise motifs in the history of the Christian Church with reference to the Mennonites in Russia in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Harvard professor used the same materials for the substance

of his presidential address in 1958 to the members of the American Society of Church History.¹⁶ Whether or not Professor Williams will be able to develop these ideas as fully and successfully as another Harvard professor (Perry Miller) has treated Augustine and Puritanism remains to be seen.

Anabaptist-Mennonite piety is likely the area where one might discover additional ideas or motifs. One may be certain that a number of recurring ideas exist between the Anabaptists and religious groups in the Middle Ages, so that the views of Ritschl and Keller will sooner or later come up again for review. Some of the dominant motifs in Anabaptism and the American free church tradition have a similarity that is striking. This might be one of the most fruitful approaches to a study of the influence of Anabaptist ideas on American thought. One questions seriously the value of exploring this subject along sectarian or denominational lines, whether one thinks of a distinct form of English Anabaptism or of the Baptist body. What are the ideas in Anabaptism which appeared before the movement arose and which have passed on to other movements? These will likely reveal to us the further significance of the movement and help us to understand its relevance in the 20th century.

III. Historiography

Since Anabaptism in English and American history has never been considered a distinct and separate movement it is treated in connection with the accounts of other groups of the Puritan left. At the turn of the century church historians such as Henry Martyn Dexter for the Congregationalists and Alfred Henry Newman for the Baptists gave place in their denominational histories for summary statements. Newman particularly in a number of his writings considered Roger Williams in the Anabaptist tradition and traced Baptist origins to the Continental Anabaptists. William Warren Sweet in what has become a standard work on American church history, *The Story of Religion in America*, was more explicit about the left wing as a creative force in American Christianity in the first edition (1930) than in the most recent revision (1950).

Among Baptists there has been a persistent interest in Anabaptist origins. Among recent Baptists this is reflected in the writings of Ernest A. Payne in England and James D. Mosteller of Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in America. In a recent view of Littell's book, *The Anabaptist View of the Church*, Mosteller says, "Baptists must be grateful for this valuable aid to an understanding of the peculiar heritage of Baptists and of American Christianity."¹⁷ Such sympathy is in line with the older Baptist histories written from the standpoint of the General

Baptists. The Baptist historians in the line of the Particular Baptists, the group which is Calvinist in theology, have always been critical of Anabaptist views and discounted any historical connection with the Continental movement.

Studies in the original sources are needed, particularly research which takes into consideration the new Puritan historiography as well as Anabaptist materials about the Reformation on the Continent. A scholarly work which appeared in 1912 but which has stood up well alongside later research is Champlin Burrage's *The Early English Dissenters in the Light of Recent Research*.¹⁸ The typology employed in this work is no longer valid, and the author has failed to include many of the earlier documents. It is nonetheless a magisterial work and the most important treatment in the field we are here considering.

A study of a different sort is Perry Miller's *Roger Williams*.¹⁹ Away below the high standards of objective study and scholarship which the author maintains in his works on Puritanism, this book portrays the founder of the Baptist Church in America as an acceptable Puritan of the more orthodox type. Theologically, Miller says, Roger Williams was a Calvinist.²⁰ It is true that he was not rebaptized until Providence (1638), but as the reviewer of this book in *Church History* has pointed out both the later and early history of Williams makes it clear it is much more accurate "to call him an Anabaptist than a Calvinist."²¹

The theological climate of our times is in general not favorable to a study of the more revolutionary movements of the Reformation. The "magisterial Reformation," as George Williams has named it, meaning the orthodox parties of Luther and Calvin, is having its day. The fact that Anabaptist studies of the Continental Reformation are recognized and respected is due no doubt to the high level of scholarship which it represents. Very little, however, is appearing in regard to the left wing of the English Reformation. One looks with hope to some of the younger scholars in the Baptist and Quaker traditions for new light on this neglected field. Most of their older colleagues are concerned with the right wing of the Reformation as a source of their traditions. It may be time for scholars of other traditions to pay some attention to the study of Anabaptism in both Old and New England. In fact, it is somewhat ironical that we know less about Anabaptism in the lands of its greatest triumph than we do about its origins in the lands where it was not permitted to grow and develop.

IV. Possible Areas for Research and Study

The main currents in American religious thought have been Puritanism and Evangelicalism.

A. *Puritanism*. There is first of all the consideration as to how

much Anabaptism influenced the movement of Puritanism in general. The impact was greatest, it appears, in the area of piety. The effort of the Puritan to externalize his faith is similar to that of the Anabaptist. It has already been suggested above that one might undertake a study of characteristic ideas in English and American Protestant piety alongside similar ideas in Anabaptism.

Did Anabaptism influence Puritan theology? Puritan theology was a modified form of Calvinist theology which came into England in the 16th century through the Rhineland reformers and the returning English refugees of Mary's reign. Perry Miller refers to this modification of Calvin as a redaction of the classical Calvinism of the early period and compares the views of the Mathers with those in the *Institutes*. The main points of difference, following Miller, are: the central place of the "federal" theology, the idea of the holy community, and the practice of excommunication with the use of discipline in general. Miller attributes these changes to certain Puritan influences in England, while Troeltsch, whose description of the altered modified Calvinism is almost similar, believes that much of the change was due to Anabaptist influence. This takes us back to an earlier period in the Reformation and raises the question as to the influence of Anabaptism on Calvinism and even Calvin himself, a subject about which many suggestive questions have been raised but no answers given.

Is the federal theology of Puritanism indebted to Anabaptism? "The doctrine of the covenant," says Miller in his essay on "The Marrow of Puritan Divinity," "becomes the scaffolding and the framework for the whole edifice of theology." It is no new suggestion that in this area of doctrine Anabaptism had its most important influence on Calvinism as it later developed.²²

There were also "Anabaptists" in New England who were not regarded as Puritan by their contemporaries at least. In the primary sources they are usually mentioned along with the Quakers and the Antinomians. There is no question but that the Quakers were a specific group with a separate and distinct history. What about the Anabaptists? They are treated to some extent in Baptist church histories, usually beginning with the Providence settlement. There were, however, many Anabaptists in the Bay Colony both before and after Providence had been started.

Roger Williams is, of course, the principal figure of interest in the history of New England Anabaptism. Unlike John Smyth at Amsterdam he did not rebaptize himself but called upon a certain Mr. Holliman to carry out the request, and then Williams baptized Holliman and ten others (1638). In this way the first

Baptist church was formed in America. There were other views held by Williams which warrant the Anabaptist label. He was expelled from the Bay Colony for holding, among other doctrines, the Anabaptist one that the Old Testament was superseded by the New and that in Biblical interpretation the New Covenant was foreshadowed by types and figures. He was given to much use of the latter. His views about religious liberty and freedom of conscience are often cited as characteristic of Anabaptism.

B. *Evangelicalism.* The Puritan period comes to an end about 1740 with the breaking out of the Great Awakening. Although the initial outbreaks were indigenous, they were soon joined by the forces of Evangelicalism emanating from England. In America it was George Whitefield who fired the various sparks into a mighty flame that was to burn brightly even after the War of the Revolution. The 19th century phase, sometimes called "the second great awakening" and the post-Civil War revivalism are to be distinguished from this earlier period.

Did Anabaptism have any relationship to this movement? By the 18th century it is no longer distinct but fully assimilated into the free churches. What about the Swiss and German Mennonites who had arrived in the 18th century and were to continue to come in large numbers after the Napoleonic Wars? Mennonites during this period were sealed off by language and other cultural barriers from participation in Evangelicalism. The Moravians who were of German origin and undergoing a time of intense spiritual renewal made some impact on the Mennonites in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. As far as we know Mennonites during this period were quietistic and not able to participate in the religious movements of the time.

In the long range view of history it may have been an advantage to Mennonites to be nonparticipants in these movements. It is true that this abstention was by default, but there was a great deal of criticism of revivalism by Mennonites.

It may have been an advantage because careful appraisal seems to indicate that these movements with their inherent pietism have contributed greatly to the current secularism in America.²³ In a sense this is a judgment upon Anabaptism, for Anabaptism, which emphasizes the relating of faith to life, was not in vital tension with these forces during the 19th century. Much is to the credit of Evangelicalism. The 19th century was—in the words of Latourette—"the Great Century" of missions. Missionary motivation owed a great deal to the revivalistic movements of the time. There is also the remarkable thesis study by Timothy Smith which reveals that these movements made more of a contribution to social thought and action than has been generally

recognized.²⁴ With all this on the credit side there still remains on the debit side the split between Christian piety and cultural life in America.

While we conclude that Anabaptism in terms of our subject has had no influence on the dominant religious thought of the 19th century, we have at the same time discovered a clue as to the task before Mennonites in the present period. "The major issue confronting Protestantism," says Dean Brauer, "is that of the divorce between personal piety and the total social-cultural life in which modern man lives."²⁵ In a certain sense this challenge falls heavily on Mennonite shoulders. Relating faith to life was their genius in the 16th century. They have done all too little in the great land of America to influence religious thought and action. They have a major opportunity before them in the present.

FOOTNOTES

¹Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), p.101.

²L. W. Racon, *A History of American Christianity* (New York, 1897), pp. 1-2.

³*A General Index to the Publications of the Parker Society*, ed. Henry Gough (Cambridge, 1855), pp. 24-25.

⁴Alan Simpson, *Puritanism in Old and New England* (Chicago, 1955), p. 1.

⁵Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (Oxford, 1947).

⁶Most of the recent histories of these groups reflect this trend. An example, possibly an extreme one, from Congregationalists is Verne D. Morey, *History Corrects Itself, Robert Browne and Congregational Beginnings* (New York, 1957).

⁷George H. Williams, *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, Vol. XXV, *The Library of Christian Classics* (Philadelphia, 1957). See the Introduction by Prof. Williams, pp. 19-38.

⁸W. J. Kühler, *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Doopsgezinden in de zestiende Eeuw* (Haarlem, 1932), p. 15.

⁹Roland H. Bainton, "The Left Wing of the Reformation," *The Journal of Religion*, XXI, 2 (April, 1941), p. 134.

¹⁰Jerald C. Brauer, *Protestantism in America, A Narrative History* (Philadelphia, 1953), pp. 7-9.

¹¹Willard L. Sperry, *Religion in America* (New York, 1946).

¹²Martin E. Marty, *A Short History of Christianity* (New York, 1959), p. 316.

¹³Quoted by Marty, *ibid.*, p. 306

¹⁴Perry Miller, *The New England Mind, The Seventeenth Century* (New York, 1939); Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being, A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge, Mass., 1948); Arthur O. Lovejoy, *Essays in the History of Ideas* (New York, 1955).

¹⁵Franklin H. Littell, *The Anabaptist View of the Church* (Boston, 1958), 2nd rev. and enlarged ed., pp. 46-78.

¹⁶According to a footnote in the March 1959 number of *Church History*, p. 3, the study of Williams will be published by Harpers. The presidential address appears in *Church History*, XXVIII, 1 (March, 1959), pp. 3-24.

¹⁷*Foundations*, II, 2 (April, 1959), pp. 175-78.

¹⁸Champlin Burrage, *The Early English Dissenters in the Light of Recent Research (1550-1641)* (Cambridge, 1912), 2 vols. (Indianapolis, 1953).

¹⁹Perry Miller, *Roger Williams, His Contribution to the American Tradition* (Indianapolis, 1953).

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 255.

²¹M. Calamandrei in review in *Church History*, XXIII, 2 (June, 1954), p. 182.

²²See the article "Covenantal Theology," by John C. Wenger in *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*.

²³Jerald C. Brauer, *Protestantism and Theological Education in America* (Chicago, 1955), Inaugural address as Dean of the Federated Theological Faculty, University of Chicago.

²⁴Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform* (Nashville, 1957).

²⁵Brauer, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF MENNONITE DOCTRINES

By J. Lawrence Burkholder

I. Definition of the Problem and Difficulties

It is assumed that the assigned title of this paper calls for a statement of the kind of social order to which Mennonites are doctrinally committed. It raises the question of Mennonite social structure, its nature, its form and its comprehension. What is the basic social ideal toward which Mennonites should strive in the light of their understanding of the Gospel? It should be noted that we are not interested in the minutiae of Christian social ethics—not even particular social problems such as war, race, divorce and income tax. These are considered as incidental to the over-all problem of the fundamental structure of Christian community. In recent years, this question has been asked by leading theologians of various traditions—hence the discussion about Christian social strategies and about “the structure of divine society.” And so we ask the question, what is the Mennonite conception of divine society? Or, what is the Mennonite community ideal and how is it to be related to the world order? Obviously this question lies close to the heart of Mennonitism.

As this writer confronts the task of setting forth the Mennonite social ideal, certain problems arise which cause hesitation. The first has to do with the adequacy of the method implied in the title. The method is simply that of drawing logical social deductions from Mennonite doctrines. But this raises the question of whether ethics is simply a process of logical deduction from certain abstract ideas or whether, in addition, the ever changing *historical* situation should be added to the criteria by which a social ideal is determined. Certainly historical factors do in actual practice enter in. This helps to explain the fact that Mennonites have historically supported a wide variety of social structures.

A second question is closely related to the first, namely, does Mennonitism stand for a *comprehensive* social ideal? Or, to put it more discriminately, has Mennonitism stood for a definite social order historically? If so, what is it? If not, should Mennonitism try to construct a theoretical blueprint of “divine society”? Some would say that there is implicit in Mennonite thought, just as there is in Christianity as such, an ultimate structure which, like a Platonic heavenly ideal, judges all historical structures and should be

sought as the social order corresponding to the Kingdom of God. Others would say that although the Gospel, and for that matter Mennonitism, has social implications, it does not imply a complete and final order. Reasons for this negative answer may vary. For example, some claim that a final comprehensive social ideal involves an unbiblical philosophical method of abstraction. Others say that Christianity does represent an absolute comprehensive social structure, but we cannot know ahead of time what it is. It may also be claimed that we know what the ideal is in a general way, but responsible involvement in the world order makes the realization of it impossible. Actually this is a major theoretical problem of Christian social ethics and our uncertainty reveals the need for serious thinking.

A third problem has to do with the absence of literature in the realm of theoretical ethics among Mennonites. The question of the social implications of Mennonite doctrines could be answered with relative certainty if we were confident as Mennonites of our ground. However, it is the impression of the writer that we have never faced the problems of *basic Christian ethics* in spite of the fact that our brand of Christianity is sometimes referred to as "ethical Christianity." We have written some fine pamphlets and monographs on ethical subjects but no one to my knowledge has yet published a Mennonite ethic as a responsible theological discipline. Hence when Mennonites try to understand their own position in the light of the questions which other traditions have asked about their ethics, Mennonites are often at a loss. For example, we have almost no literature on the fundamental question of love and justice.

A fourth problem has to do with the state of Mennonite theology. I do not deny the existence of Mennonite theology. But it is clear that Mennonite theology is not a clearly defined and mature system of ideas. This is not to say that Mennonite theology lacks integrity but that Mennonite theology has been largely implicit rather than explicit. Mennonites have no "great" theological tradition. As simple Biblicists, as persecuted disciples, as practical Christians, as cultural separatists, our theology has never received either the initial cast of *Summas* or of *Institutes* nor the cultivation and refinement of generations of theological thought. We know what we know in the main, but we have never considered many of the subtleties of theology which, incidentally, sometimes turn out to be the formative factors in a theology. Probably a close examination of Anabaptist Mennonite writings will indicate more of a variety of theological opinions than we once believed.

Nevertheless such problems as these are not unique to Mennonites. I have been forced to wonder what I would say if I were asked to write on the "Social Implications of Lutheran Doctrine"

or the "Social Implications of Reformed Doctrine." Despite the high degree of theological articulation that these traditions represent, an enterprise of this sort would still require more than a dash of subjectivity since both the theology and the ethics of Lutherans and Calvinists have changed significantly through the centuries. The most important obstacle, therefore, is the somewhat abstract and artificial nature of the task as such.

Procedure: The plan of this paper is to state briefly the main doctrines of the Mennonite tradition which bear on the problem of social structure. Next will be a brief historical review of the principal types of sound organization found among Mennonites. Then the question will be raised about the kind of social order these doctrines most logically call for, assuming that Mennonitism stands for a definite and comprehensive social order. Following this an alternative approach to the question of social order will be presented—an approach which does not include a comprehensive social ideal. Finally, some issues between the two approaches will be considered.

II. Mennonite Doctrines and Their Social Implications

Which doctrines are relevant to our question? How are they to be interpreted and which of them are most significant for the problem of social structure?

1. *Discipleship:* The idea of discipleship is probably the most important Anabaptist Mennonite doctrine for our problem. The meaning of discipleship is that the Christian life consists of following after (Nachfolge) Christ. This is the "essence of Christianity." Discipleship presupposes absolute loyalty to Christ in response to His saving benefits. Christ alone is authoritative because He is the Son of God, the Saviour of the world and the revealer of God. Discipleship is essentially a personal relation of the follower with Christ, the Lord and Master.

With respect to the form of the Christian life, the life and teachings are normative. The commands of Christ are therefore to be taken seriously and for what they are. They are to be obeyed. A speaker at Zofingen said, "Jesus gave us an example as is stated in I Peter 2, that we should follow His footsteps under the cross." This gives Anabaptist ethics a radical non-prudential character even a revolutionary character if carried to their logical extreme. For example, the love ethic is taken to mean not only brotherhood but nonresistance to evil. This is enough to give Mennonite ethics an utterly unique quality. Nonresistance distinguishes it from all ethical systems which are intended to guarantee the stability and order of society. Nonresistance is a kind of response which is characteristic of Jesus' "hard sayings" such as those about turning the other cheek, forgiving seventy times seven, giving to him who asketh and going the second mile. It is an ethic which "exceeds"

the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees just as it exceeds all systems of prudential ethics.

Negatively, the ethic of discipleship means "the rejection of force in human relations" and therefore over-all administrative responsibility for the social, economic and political structures of the world is declined. Force and love are held in absolute conflict. Anabaptists and Mennonites have to the writer's knowledge justified only one application of force by Christians, namely, the socio-spiritual force of the ban. Force, of course, is necessary in the world order but this simply means that the Christian can have no part with the ordering of the world. For this reason, the Anabaptists by and large came to the conclusion early in their history that the magistracy, an office lying "outside the perfection of Christ," must be rejected by Christians. As Harold Bender puts it, the Anabaptist, "is not concerned with what goes on in the world . . . To the charge of the reformers that such a denial of responsibility for the social order could mean the disruption of the functions of government and ultimately lead to chaos, the Anabaptists answered that there would always be sufficient available persons to fill the government offices."¹

Furthermore the Anabaptists were opposed to the basic structure of society in so far as they were critical of "lording it over" and of the practical responsibilities of "judging" the rights of contending egos in the realm of worldly affairs. It is noteworthy that the authors of the *Schleitheim Confession* saw in Jesus' refusal to arbitrate in the case of the brothers and the inheritance, a precedent for His followers according to which Christians must live on a level which transcends the egoism which is more or less assumed by society. What this really means is that Mennonites are committed to a way of life and an attitude toward society which places them in opposition to the ways and goals of civilization. This opposition has been expressed variously during Mennonite history, but it is no exaggeration to say that its consequence in Mennonite thought and life has been the rejection of civilization. This is not to say that Anabaptists were anarchists or that they were enemies of human values. They were simply indifferent to the cause of human culture. Their spiritual outlook, their preoccupation with the Kingdom, their eschatological orientation and their ethics simply disqualified them for the mundane tasks of the human community as a whole. It is true that the Anabaptists were not opposed to all aspects of life in society. They have always been more or less in society and have appreciated the amenities of society. They have accepted some of the "tools" of civilization but they have been reluctant to accept the structure and purposes of civilization. Anabaptists regarded world culture as Christ regarded "the Gentiles" who seek after security and

"lord it over others" by tangible and intangible instruments of compulsion. This is a most important fact to consider in connection with the question of the structure of Mennonite society.

When we consider the Mennonite approach to ethics, we note that the idea of discipleship contains important methodological consequences. These can be stated negatively, recalling some of the formative ideas of other systems of Christian ethics. For example, (1) discipleship means the rejection of philosophical norms. One could conceivably make a place for the descriptive and analytic roles of philosophy but philosophy has never been accepted, let alone considered, as a basis for Christian ethics. The importance of this will be realized when it is recalled that Christianity, especially the Catholic tradition, has relied from time to time on theories of natural law, especially Stoic, to define the role of the Christian in the world. It is no exaggeration to say that one of the links between the Church and civilization has been supplied by Greek ethics of reason and prudence. As Biblicists, Mennonites have never seen the necessity of a philosophical bridge with the world. (2) Furthermore, discipleship ethics has resulted in the rejection of the orders of creation (*Shoepfungsordnungen*) as a clue to Christian behavior. When one recalls the importance of the orders of creation for the reformers and for such modern theologians as Brunner and Sittler as they considered the problems of Christian community, it is noteworthy that Mennonites, with their exclusive reliance on the commands of Christ and the Apostles, have no significant place for the doctrine of creation. (3) Mennonites reject the Old Testament as an authoritative guide for conduct. (4) Mennonites have subordinated, if not eliminated, historical pragmatics or "contextualism" in ethics—at least when the context or historical relativity calls for conduct which was seen to be in conflict with the teachings of Jesus.

The upshot of this is that Mennonite-Anabaptist ethics belongs methodologically to the *imitatio christi* tradition. This is to say that the internal motivation for Mennonite ethics is the spirit of Christ and the external form for Christian ethics is the "example" of the historical Jesus as described in the synoptic Gospels and witnessed to by the Apostles. This is the *simplicity* of Mennonite ethics.

2. *The Two Kingdoms*: History is interpreted as a struggle between two supernatural powers resulting in two spiritual dominions—the dominion of God and the dominion of Satan. This is accepted by all orthodox Christian bodies. The uniqueness of the Anabaptist-Mennonite view of the two kingdoms is apparent, however, when the social implications of the doctrine of the two worlds are set forth. According to the Anabaptists the Kingdoms imply two distinct "classes of people" with their contrasting atti-

tudes toward life and community. According to *Schleithem*, "All creatures are in but two classes, good and bad, believing and unbelieving, darkness and light, the world and those who have come out of the world, God's temple and idols, Christ and Belial; and none have part with the other."

The doctrine of the two kingdoms has had two social consequences: (1) separation from the world and (2) the creation of a new society. But this raised the following question, what does it mean to be separated from the world and what does it mean to create a new order? Granted that separation is first and fundamentally a spiritual and moral approach to evil in the world, to what extent is evil so inextricably structuralized in society that social and even geographical separation becomes the logical consequence of spiritual separation? Does our view of history and our perfectionistic ethic imply the monastery as Niebuhr says, or agricultural communities as Mennonites have sometimes claimed? And does the new community of disciples imply the creation of a *distinct* and *comprehensive* social order? If so, how comprehensive is it to be and how radically different must it be from the Kingdoms of this world? Does it mean a totally different order—as different as the Kingdom of God is different from the Kingdoms of this world—an order which may be characterized by the Spirit of love in contrast to the classical principles of power and law, an order in which nonresistance replaces coercion, community replaces property, and spiritual consensus replaces political authority? Or do the two orders dovetail, each supplementing the other?

Furthermore the doctrines of the two words raise the question of values and obligations. For example, Christians should seek first the Kingdom of God. To Anabaptists this meant that the church must be the central reality in the life of the Christian. Furthermore the Christian should not spend his energies and concerns with the problems of world order. The concerns, conflicts, troubles, Summit Conferences and struggles for justice should not be permitted to turn the eyes of the Christian from the affairs of the church and the kingdom. According to Harold Bender, (the Mennonite concept of the church) "leads the Christian to withdraw his major energies from active participation in the general program of world betterment and attempted reconstruction of the entire non-Christian world order and focus them on the building of the Christian community. His hope for the world is the church and the creation of a Christian social order within the fellowship of the church brotherhood. Extension of this Christian order by the conversion of individuals and their transfer out of the world into the church will be his method of working at saving the world;

it is the method Christ and His Apostles used; it is the method of the Anabaptist fathers."²

3. *The Brotherhood Church*: According to the brotherhood ideal, the church consists of a fellowship of men and women who are committed to Christ and to one another. They promise to share with one another in spiritual and temporal affairs. But the question is, what are the social consequences of brotherhood? How far is brotherhood to be carried? It is fair to say that the problem of the Mennonite social ideal depends largely on our answer to this question. In the history of Mennonitism various answers have been given to the practical social consequences of brotherhood. The issue is largely one of self-determination versus group determination or the authority of the individual Christian versus the authority of the church. Roughly speaking it is possible to examine all Mennonite community efforts on a continuum of group control. At the extreme end of such a continuum would be the Hutterites among whom *all* of life comes under the power of group decision. The individual *voluntarily* submits to the group in all matters pertaining to both spiritual and temporal affairs. This is not to say that the individual voice is completely silenced. The submission of the individual results from a theory of the way in which God guides His people through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit reveals His will through brotherhood consensus and consensus means unanimity—not majority rule. Therefore the individual voluntarily surrenders his powers of self-determination in the spirit of (*Gelassenheit*). The practical consequence is that the brotherhood decides with authority the conditions of life—such conditions as pertain to marriage, education, vocation, clothing, food, travel, and the care and destiny of children. The social consequences of such a conception of Brotherhood is communalism.

For other groups of Anabaptists and Mennonites the individual is given a wider range of personal responsibility in decision making. It is customary for the Mennonite as an individual to choose his wife, the place where he will live, his vocation, his education and his economic life. Certainly all Mennonite brotherhood churches have stressed the economic, social and educational implications of brotherhood but in ways which have assumed large areas of individual freedom and consequently they have accepted community patterns in accordance with these freedoms. Therefore as we look for the ideal social structure, a most important prior question is this, how far is brotherhood to be carried?

4. *Perfectionism*: The term "perfectionism" is an ambiguous term and must be presented as an Anabaptist-Mennonite doctrine with care. It is certainly not used to describe actual moral attainment—Mennonites do not claim to be perfect. Nor does it represent

the moral counterpart to an inner mystical experience as among some of the Holiness groups. It is used to refer to the nature of the ethical obligation of Christians according to the Mennonite understanding. It means that Christians are obligated to do nothing less than the perfect will of God as revealed in the life and teachings of Christ. Christ came to "fulfill" the law. This fulfillment is perfection and as disciples we are obligated to move on this high level of fulfillment. In a provisional way nearly all Christian traditions would agree to this. However, many traditions see factors in the Christian's situation which complicate the matter and tend to make the perfect ethical ideal an impossibility. Many traditions, particularly Lutheranism, see the Christian as one caught in a system of life in which the perfect ideal is seldom a possibility. Life's choices are rarely choices between blacks and whites but between various shades of gray. Therefore, it is claimed that the Christian must choose the better of undesirable alternatives. Hence, the talk about "moral ambiguity" and "social sin" and the necessity of compromise.

Mennonites, on the other hand, have never really seen the necessity of deciding between alternatives all of which are evil. The moral outlook of Mennonites is one of confidence that "there is a way out." Of course, it may mean retreat from the situation. Indeed retreat from the morally ambiguous is one of the basic elements of the Anabaptist-Mennonite approach to the moral life. It is accepted as an *a priori* principle, a principle so deeply planted in the Mennonite heart that it is seldom questioned. Hence there is nothing in the Anabaptist outlook that corresponds to the "tragic vision" which is so much discussed today. Yes, the vision of the Anabaptists was "tragic" but the tragic elements were of the nature of suffering (cf. *The Martyrs' Mirror*) rather than ethical conflict.

5. *The Simple Life*: For generations Mennonites have stood for the simple life. Is this cultural romanticism or an authentic element of the Gospel? The writer feels that the Mennonite emphasis on simplicity is a profound insight into the nature of the Christian life. The simple life is the unencumbered life—the life free from the distractions of "many things" and multiple demands. Life is kept simple so that it can be kept free for the work of the Kingdom and so that it will not be hampered by conflicting commitments. The "simple life" represents the social equivalent to the simplicity of mind and heart of the Christian. Undoubtedly this is one of the roots of the Mennonite preference for agrarian communities. Rural life has been advocated as an alternative to the morass of bureaucratic civilization with its "binding commitments," social and economic involvements, distractions and secularism.

6. *Evangelism*: The importance of evangelism for the problem of the Christian community cannot be exaggerated. We have been reminded by Franklin Littell of the significance of the Great Commission for the Anabaptists. It even implied a world view from the perspective of evangelism. Hence "hedge preachers" and Luther's anxiety about what "loose living itineracy would mean for social institutions—especially the family.

The importance of evangelism for the problem of community arises from the fact that it tends to pull in a direction away from community life. The interests of community are usually met through social stability, economic and cultural conservatism whereas the interests of evangelism have been served through "tent-dwelling" mobility, economic risk, cultural adaptation (the "indigenous approach") and dynamic involvement in the world order. One of the Mennonite problems is to know how to give what is valid in both of these goals, i.e. stable and meaningful community life and evangelism, proper expression at the same time.

One of the most interesting theoretical aspects of this question emerges when we think of it in terms of the Christian calling. What is the Christian called to do? So far as the writer knows the Anabaptists' answer was evangelism. The Great Commission is the sum and substance of the Christian calling. The significance of this may be seen when compared with the Reformer's conception of the calling. The Reformers thought of the calling primarily in terms of those forms of work which are necessary to human community. Shoemaking and farming became divine vocations. The idea of the calling was, in fact, the link between Christianity and the world. Anabaptists, on the other hand, limited the "call" to the work of witnessing even though we should not gather from this that the Anabaptists saw no relation between Christianity and daily work.

This leads to the question, is there a clear theological basis for community in the Mennonite tradition? Or have Mennonites simply formed communities out of force of circumstances such as persecution or for no better reasons than that it is natural for like-minded Christians to live near each other? In answer to this question it may be said that in so far as we have formed communities deliberately and in so far as we have promoted certain types of community life (agrarian communities), the reasons are largely ethical. Agrarianism has had its base in the ethical attitudes of Mennonites. The Mennonite community has been seen as an alternative to the city with its power structures, its secularism and its impersonality. We have never really promoted farming theologically as the Christian calling. When we spoke about farming as a calling, we were moved more by romantic feelings than theological thought.

III. Historical Types of Mennonite Communities

We wish now to review the main types of community patterns which have been fostered by the Mennonite church in her history. In some cases these arose more by sheer force of circumstances than forethought but in other cases they have come into existence as a deliberate choice. Some of them began by accident but have been defended and promoted as an ideal later on. An analysis of the principal types of community among Mennonites would suggest three types.

1. *"Full Community"*: By full community we refer to the communal system of the Hutterites. The communal system of the Hutterites is the most deliberate attempt by Mennonites to find a final and complete Christian social order. Among the Hutterites, communalism has the power of an ideology. It would be unfair, however, to categorize it as an ideology without first seeing its theological base. The "full community" pattern of the Hutterites is intended to express brotherhood and also to embody in a social form the principles of the Kingdom of God. The logic is simple and it runs like this: "Jesus taught His disciples to renounce the world, including its riches, and to follow Him. But following Christ is to enter into a fellowship in which the barriers which normally separate men from one another in the world are broken down. At the same time, disciples of Christ are commanded to live in the Kingdom. This means a distinct, separated and utterly different social order than that which is characterized by civil society. The order which most perfectly fulfills this ideal is the communal order."

The significance of the Bruderhof is that it is a *distinct* alternative to the world system. The difference between the mode of life of the Hutterite and others is therefore not an *occasional* difference as is ordinarily the case, but it is a *structural* difference. Hutterites live within a fundamentally different order, an order which they believe is Christ's intention for His people.

2. *The Closed Theocratic Community*: Reference is made here to those occasions in Mennonite history when Mennonites have found themselves in almost complete isolation from the world and have consequently been forced to provide for themselves virtually all the services of the church and the state. This was the case among the Mennonites in South Russia for many years and also among the Mennonite colonies of Paraguay. From an ideological standpoint it would seem strange that there would appear among the Russian Mennonites virtually a *corpus christianum*. This is, however, a demonstration of the fact that the force of historical circumstances often determines social patterns more than theology. It also proves that Mennonites cannot get along without community organization and if the world is not present to sup-

ply the pattern, Christians must assume this responsibility. Also, we cannot resist asking, as a result of the Russian experience which really in many respects represented an outstanding achievement in culture and religion, whether we are against a *corpus christianum* in principle or whether we are against one that went sour.

3. *The Open Community*: By the "open community" we refer to the semi-isolated agrarian communities of the North American Mennonites. These came about largely by historical accident, i.e. through immigration. No deliberate attempt was made to seal the community off completely from the world. Nevertheless, a measure of isolation was assumed—enough to give the community sufficient autonomy to qualify as "religious" community and to embody a "unique way of life." The ideal open Mennonite community is sufficiently removed from the stream of American life to attract the attention of sociologists and agricultural experts. If we read the writings of Guy F. Hershberger, J. W. Fretz and Melvin Gingerich and others, we find the idea of the Mennonite community advocated as an alternative to the main socio-economic forces of the modern world. Among the undesirable forces are urbanism, secularism, unionism, and impersonality. Furthermore, support for the rural community has been urged not only because of the conflict between the nonresistant way of life and the power structures of the city, but because Mennonites frequently lose their distinctive principles, if not their religion altogether, when they move to the city. Hence the "agricultural thesis" which says that the best social base for our ethics is the agricultural community.

IV. Common Community Characteristics

We have noted that Mennonitism has taken diverse community forms. Undoubtedly this is due to the fact that Mennonites have seldom planned communities in line with a well-defined theology of community. However, various types of communities exhibit common characteristics which suggest common goals even though these goals have been more instinctive than deliberate. Some of these are as follows:

1. They are all examples of *religious* community in which the church is the center of life. The community is considered an extension of the church. The church rather than the political and economic order at large ideally determine the pattern of community life. Hence it is safe to say that the church and the community are one. Harold S. Bender has said in this connection:

"Have we not historically, and in our highest thoughts, always held that to be 'Christian' means to follow Christ in *all* our ways including what the world calls 'secular' and that the 'church' is a brotherhood of love in which all the members minister to each other in all their needs *both* tem-

poral and spiritual? And what is a Christian community than a fellowship of disciples of Christ sharing a common faith, and under a common Lord helping one another achieve the fullness of abundant life which the Saviour came to bring? ... I hope ... (we may) eliminate from our minds the dangerously unscriptural and un-Mennonite duality by which we so often draw a line between sacred and secular, between church and community."³ J. W. Fretz also points out that the term "community" is a religious concept among Mennonites. The church is so much a part of the community that: "in common usage the terms 'Mennonite community' and 'Mennonite church' (congregation) are used interchangeably almost to the point of being synonymous ... When applied to Mennonites ... the term 'community' is basically a religious concept with certain sociological implications. The economic, the social, and the political aspects of the Mennonite community are all subordinate to the religious."⁴

2. Mennonite communities have been agrarian. Ironically Anabaptism arose in the city. As a radical creative movement it could hardly have arisen among the peasantry. Nevertheless, Mennonitism has seldom if ever perpetuated itself under urban conditions. It would seem that the Mennonite way of life is fostered more naturally in the open spaces of the country than in the crowded cities. The simplicity of rural life has been defended as the condition in which the nonresistant way of life thrives. According to Guy F. Hershberger, "Certainly no environment is more favorable for the perpetuation of the nonresistant faith than the rural community; and for this reason the Mennonite churches will do well to keep themselves established in such communities, with a high percentage of their members directly engaged in agriculture." Scholars outside our own tradition have likewise held to a most favorable relation between Christianity and agrarianism. T. S. Eliot suggests in *The Idea of a Christian Society* that a Christian order can be established better in an agricultural economy than in an industrial economy. Troeltsch has pointed to the leaning of Christianity toward simple personal relationships which are most naturally achieved in the agrarian culture. According to Troeltsch:

"Christianity has a distinct leaning ... towards little groups and corporations which are closely bound together in personal relations, in which the formal, legal and economic tendency of a dehumanized and abstract organization of the common life has not yet forced purely personal relationships and decisions in the sphere of isolated instances."⁵

Furthermore agriculture has fostered, in its initial stages at least, a kind of social uniformity which has gone hand in hand with spiritual uniformity. Especially under the conditions of pre-scientific agriculture, the more or less uniform resistance and fruitfulness of the soil has tended to support a social, ethical and

economic kinship which is harder to maintain under more complex conditions.

3. Mennonite communities have been more or less controlled isolated communities. The degree of isolation has varied greatly from almost complete isolation of the Hutterite communities and the colonies of Russia and Paraguay to the relatively open communities of the American Mennonites. Nevertheless, virtually all the writings of Mennonites on the subject of community relations during the past twenty years, especially from about 1940 to 1953, have assumed sufficient community autonomy to assure the fulfillment of the ideal of "religious community." It is noteworthy that when Mennonite scholars confronted for the first time the great forces of modern American life (industrialism, urbanization, democratic responsibility, etc.), the Mennonite community was not only recognized incidentally as the answer but it was promoted in cultural conferences and in such publications as the *Mennonite Community* magazine and in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*. Furthermore the idea of the Mennonite community became the essential framework of Christian social ethics in Professor Guy F. Hersherberger's *War, Peace and Nonresistance*. It has been broadly assumed that Christian ethics requires a separate social base and a most favorable base is the Mennonite community. Therefore the consuming problem of the church during the past 20 years has been how to maintain the Mennonite community in the face of the forces of modern industrial and political society?

Our Present Situation: It is commonplace to point to the fact of change in the Mennonite community. But the question which needs to be asked concerns the nature and significance of change. Is the change superficial or is it fundamental? My feeling is that the change is fundamental and the net result is the disappearance of the Mennonite community as a distinct social reality. It was once assumed not only that Mennonites were sufficiently concentrated in a particular locality to warrant the term "Mennonite community" but what is more important, there were sufficient obvious differences between the way of life of Mennonites and the ways of other American people to warrant the distinction. However, the fact that many traditional Mennonite communities are becoming urbanized, the fact that Mennonite farms are being turned into housing projects and the fact that Mennonites are becoming vocationally diversified, all add up to the conclusion that the Mennonite community is becoming a thing of the past.

What is actually happening is that Mennonites, after many years of isolation, are no longer able to resist the forces that have made modern America what it is today. To understand what is happening to Mennonites, we must see what has happened to America during the past one hundred years. Within this period America

has been changed from an agricultural nation to the greatest industrial power in the world. The adoption of the assembly line, specialization, labor saving machinery and now automation has brought not only increased production, indeed an "affluent society," but also social and spiritual changes no less revolutionary. It has brought the city as the seat of cultural values, vast power blocks such as those of great capitalistic institutions and labor unions. It has brought the organization of life, (*The Organizational Revolution*), mass communication, secularization, and the "omni-competent" government of the socialistic state. This is not to say that all of these developments are a direct result of the industrial revolution. They go hand in hand in mutual interaction.

What is the significance of the impact of Mennonites with these great revolutionary changes in society?

Most important is the fact that the Mennonite community is losing its religious character. It is being secularized just like virtually everything is being secularized today. *Religion is no longer the unifying and formative factor that it once was even though as individuals Mennonites are religious.* In 1945 Paul Erb was able to say in all sincerity and in truth what could hardly be said today about the Mennonite community. Here are some random quotations from a significant article in a significant issue of the *M.Q.R.*:

"The heart of the Mennonite community is the meeting house ... (The ministers) live with the people during the week, and to a considerable extent earn their living the same way that the members do... Members of the church, most of whom are farmers, co-operate in their work. They help one another in thrashing and corn picking, in butchering and in barn raising. The women help each other with their artistic patch-work quilts and perhaps in drying corn and canning fruit... There is a definite connection between the secular and the religious phases of life. The religion, moreover, is not peripheral, but is central and basic to the whole structure... The true connotation of the term Mennonite as applied to (the Mennonite community) is a religious one... The members of this community would not think of their community as having any other unifying principle than their common religious faith and practice."⁶

There can be no doubt but that what Erb has said about the Mennonite community applies yet today in some places. But generally speaking this and other descriptions of the Mennonite community which appeared during and immediately after World War II sound rather quaint and romantic when compared with the mechanized and commercial culture in which Mennonites live and work today. *In fact, it may be said as a general rule that economics and politics are replacing religion as the formative factors in the community building processes among Mennonites today. We are moving*

from religious community to political community. The context is that which is provided by society at large. We are really a part of a great and complex society which we cannot control. Therefore the big question which faces the Mennonites today concerns the kind of social ethics Mennonites will hold to in view of the fact that the framework of Mennonite social ethics has been taken away. Once we controlled to a considerable extent our context which we held to be necessary to our nonresistant way of life. Now we no longer control the environment and so it raised the question of whether we should retire from the scene of social concern altogether as a pietistic sect or whether we can find a way to work at social ethics in the context of the world and be ready to make the adjustments which such a course requires.

V. The Fundamental Question of Christian Community

At this point it may be helpful to review the development of this paper up to this point. It will be recalled that the assigned topic was interpreted to call for a statement of the Mennonite concept of Christian community implied by Mennonite doctrine. The question is, assuming that Christianity has social consequences, what does this mean in terms of a distinctly Christian social order? Certain initial difficulties and ambiguities were then recognized. Then certain pertinent doctrines were listed and interpreted. This was followed by a historical analysis of distinctive Mennonite social patterns. Finally some attention was given to the revolutionary changes taking place in America and how these affect the Mennonite community. It was pointed out that these changes are crucial since the social base which was once considered essential to the "nonresistant way of life" is fast disappearing.

But all of this is preliminary to the problem of this paper. Apart from historical factors, which kind of social order is implied by Mennonite doctrines? Our answer will of course depend on a number of factors: (1) Which of the doctrines are to be emphasized and which are to be given less weight, and (2) how radically are the doctrines to be interpreted? That is to say, agreed that as Mennonites we stand for discipleship, holiness and separation from evil, brotherhood, evangelistic witness, which of these are central and which are peripheral? And how rigorously are these to be carried out? Is this not the problem which has occasioned many of the divisions in the Mennonite church and which continue to hold Mennonite groups apart? Virtually all of us have a place in our outlook for these Mennonite doctrines but we interpret them differently. Our interpretation is therefore unavoidably subjective and undoubtedly historically conditioned more than we realize.

But to return to the question of the Mennonite community ideal,

i.e. the social order implied by our emphasis upon separation, of nonresistant love, of the centrality of the church and the avoidance of social and political responsibility, of the simple life, of perfectionism and of evangelism, it would appear to me that the most consistent answer is the order of full community in some such manner as is practiced by the Hutterites. Certainly the Bruderhof is about the most radical form of Christian social community known—radical in the sense that it takes Anabaptist teachings to a logical extreme and in the sense that it deviates most decidedly with the world order. As stated previously, the Bruderhof represents a form of community in which all aspects of life are subservient to the experience of brotherhood. Furthermore it is structurally separated from the world at least so far as internal operations of the community are concerned. Also, it expresses the radical dualism of Anabaptism. In addition, the members of the Bruderhof express most consistently the ideal of one's *total* orientation in the redemptive order rather than in the world as well. Characteristically the Hutterites, new and old, have very little interest in the events of world society and most certainly feel no responsibility toward it except to set up a clear alternative to the world order. Furthermore, the Bruderhof keeps alive the ideal of charismatic leadership and the supremacy of spiritual modes of thought and action over political modes. In other words, if one is willing to look at Anabaptist-Mennonite principles and refuses to water them down to convenience as we are all so prone to do, then we must admit that only a radical concept of community can result. In other words, the writer is saying that if we take Anabaptist principles and carry them out to their logical extreme—assuming for the time being that this is the way one arrives at a comprehensive social community ethic—then the Bruderhof or something very much like it seems to be the result.

VI. Another Approach

The author wishes at this point to introduce a different approach to the problem of Christian community than has been assumed so far in this paper. Whether this new approach can be defended in terms of Mennonitism, the author is not certain. But since the traditional approach gives us so much trouble, a new approach may at least be aired. It has both negative and positive elements. Negatively it waives all final comprehensive theories of Christian community. Positively it would reorient all concerns about community around the missionary and prophetic motifs in the context of the world. But this requires further explanation.

With respect to complete and final social theories such as would set forth for ever and a day the "structure of divine necessity," it is claimed that these can be only misleading in the face of the

dynamics of modern pluralistic society. Before modern dynamics all of the traditional Christian social ideologies either crumble or must be drastically modified to meet new situations. Catholic organic syntheses, Lutheran dichotomous orders, Calvinistic Holy Communities and Mennonite communities are all considerably anachronistic even though they do have a residual power to mold policy today. Even the idea of the "Responsible Society," the over-all social concept of the World Council of Churches since Amsterdam in 1948, cannot be accepted as a social blueprint. It is simply a term calling for the freedom of the individual and of various groups to be socially effective and the utter necessity for everybody to do his best to secure justice and peace. It does not stand for any existing order as such or an ideology.

Instead of settling on a final scheme of things in an abstract way, the writer proposes that the question of community relations should be given the flexibility and the fluidity which is implied in an aggressive missionary witness and prophetic ministry in the world. Although we cannot help but dream of a Christianized world and the community pattern which such a realization would bring, we will concentrate on the task of evangelism and work at community problems in that light. What this really means is that the Christian's place is in the world and, assuming that the world is not Christianized and by no means dominated by the church, the Christian nevertheless works at particular problems of community life amid the sinful order rather than in a separate order. We would, in other words, not try to form perfect societies, "islands of sanity" outside Babylon in the tradition of monasticism and the Bruderhof and the Mennonite Community. Rather we would go about our work of evangelistic witness, prophetic criticism and service in a society which we frankly don't control. The task is to form churches in the very heart of paganism and to "transform" as much of world culture as possible while remaining in world culture. In other words, we must be willing to assume the social framework of the world despite the fact that it is less than ideal. We shall of course criticize the existing order but at the same time assume certain responsibilities for it, contribute creatively to its health and identify ourselves with it, albeit redemptively. Of course the possibility of social "transformation" is a real one and the church should pray for the regenerative power of Christ to affect the social order at large. But no deliberate effort will be made to set up a separate pure and holy absolute alternative. Any new order which is forthcoming must follow naturally in a more or less *ad hoc* way from the impact of the spirit of Christ on the social order at large.

The social efforts of the church will therefore be *occasional* rather than *structural*, here and there, rather than everywhere.

The immediate goals will be "proximate" rather than absolute. Christians, in other words, will be the corpuscles of the "body politic." Instead of trying to set up a nonpolitical "spiritual" order, which our critics tell us turn out to be political orders anyhow, we will be the oxygen-carrying, life-carrying corpuscles which heal the body and which struggle to close the wounds even, to carry on the analogy, to the point of death. To be sure the corpuscles will flow on the arteries supplied by the body politic. The political order supplies the cultural framework of justice and law, of order and defense, of property, education, economic controls and welfare. Christians who are living in such a structure serve the general welfare in the context of the world order.

With respect to involvement, there can be no doubt but that Christians are involved both in the righteousness and the failures of such an order. They cannot escape all the conflicts and the "ambiguities" of society. But if their motivation for being a participant in society is redemptive and if they keep before them both the judgment of God and the mercy of God so that they neither give an absolute sanction to the relativity of all human achievements nor end up in despair, there is hope for a continuous creative impact on society for the Glory of God.

VII. Counter Arguments

In order to set before us very frankly the issues which are involved in such a proposal, it may be helpful to present some of the arguments against this latter proposal from the standpoint of Anabaptist-Mennonite radicalism, especially the kind of arguments which one hears from the advocates of the Bruderhof.

1. It may be argued that the position of dynamic involvement with special emphasis on missionary and prophetic witness as presented above has lost sight of the Kingdom of God as an immediate goal and as a comprehensive social reality. It has, in other words, settled for something less than the Kingdom of God, having pushed the Kingdom into the transcendent realm or into a future eschatological state. It might also be claimed that this view tends to reduce discipleship into individualistic categories since it makes no place for a radically distinct social order.

2. It might also be argued that the above "solution" accepts compromise for all practical purposes. One cannot own houses, barns, factories, bargain and advertise and enter even into relatively limited positions of social responsibility without compromising the pure ethic of nonresistant love. Some would say that a program of involvement, albeit limited involvement, will call for ethical categories which move on a lower level than the highest.

3. Some would also point to the futility of trying to save this old world by improving it from within. It is destined to destruc-

tion and so, what is the use of propping it up? Missionary efforts, prophetic social witness and service may be meant well but they are futile. From a certain point of view, it may be asked whether anything ultimately significant has been accomplished when a congregation has been established and its members are turned out into the world order six days a week to live in principle not much better than the "cultured pagan."

4. It is sometimes held that real brotherhood is impossible as long as Brethren are tied up in the world order—an order which is built upon the premise of individualism. The full experience of brotherhood cannot be obtained unless the spirit of brotherhood is supported by a *system* which is constructed upon the principles of brotherhood. In other words, brotherhood is possible only in a system which transcends the implied egoism of law, private property, competition, vocational diversity and social responsibility.

5. Sometimes one is reminded also of the utter necessity of setting up a distinct and comprehensive order alongside the world as the only realistic answer to the "sect cycle." In other words, the forces of assimilation are so great that only a completely different environment can withstand the pressures of conformity. Neither a spirit of evangelism nor the awareness of the problem which comes from the study of theology, even the study of Troeltsch, will suffice to withstand the world apart from a decisive, across-the-board, break.

6. Finally, it may be argued that to limit one's objectives to evangelism and to prophetic witness on social issues without committing oneself to a comprehensive social ideal for the church is really to refuse to face all the facts of life as well as of the Gospel. There is much more to the Christian life than evangelism and an occasional social pronouncement. Community life is a fact of nature and Christian community is a fact of nature plus the Gospel. To refuse to face the question of a comprehensive social pattern which one may call the "pattern of divine society" is simply shortsighted and unrealistic. It fails to carry ethics to its logical conclusion. Here the advocates of the Mennonite community, the Bruderhof, may join the criticism of the Catholics and the Presbyterians.

VIII. Arguments in Reply

Having cited the above arguments as the kind of criticisms that are occasionally offered by the proponents of Anabaptist radicalism in opposition to a more socially involved and responsible approach to the problem of community, it would be desirable to set forth briefly the criticisms that can and are frequently set forth against the radical withdrawal position—especially that of the Hutterites.

1. It may be questioned whether fidelity to the New Testament

requires the creation of a separated comprehensive utopian community. Certainly this is not what Paul set out to do. He formed churches (congregations) and they had fellowship (koinonia) within the church but Paul did not encourage the early Christians to establish Bruderhofs or anything of the kind. At best, the idealistic communistic community is a passing phase of New Testament life. The experiment at Jerusalem (Acts 2) was a temporary manifestation of the Spirit which was by no wise universalized.

2. It may also be questioned whether to require full community does justice to the individual initiative and responsibility that is implied in self-hood. There is a point where the submission of the individual to the group becomes subservience. Eventually this leads to the loss of individuality and to the encouragement of mediocrity.

3. The doctrine of "full community" is in danger of tying Christ too rigidly to a particular system. It is in danger of turning Christianity into an ideology.

4. Geographical withdrawal and insistence on a radically different form of life violates the principles of effective evangelistic outreach. It is true that radical communities can sometimes show significant percentages of increase. However, we should not believe that large numbers can be expected to submit to such a rigorous system as the Bruderhof. If Paul had insisted on a rigid program of radical social separatism one may surmise that Christianity would not have had such a profound influence on the Western world. It would likely have died in the hills of Judea or of Egypt.

5. It may also be questioned whether such a summary disregard for the problems of civilization as is implied by the radical withdrawal of the separated community does not fall short of the full meaning of neighbor love and the universal Lordship of Christ. How can one love the neighbor, i.e. the neighbor as presented through the social and political realm unless he get out into the social order in some kind of responsible capacity?

6. Finally, it may be pointed out on the basis of history that idealistic societies which are dominated by perfectionism generally go sour. They are constantly plagued by human tendency to be less than perfect. Constant self-criticism and discipline may tune the strings of moral and spiritual perfection for a while but eventually they break.

IX. The Mennonite Dilemma

Many of us who wrestle with the problem of the relation of the Mennonite Church to the life of man find ourselves in a dilemma. On the other hand, we wish to be loyal to our Anabaptist heritage with its radical emphases on separateness, purity and the creation

of the ideal church and social order. And yet our concern for world culture and its problems tend to draw us into the life of the world. Our experience with the liberal arts in college and our associations with men and movements in the ecumenical church as well as with economic and social groups, enlarges our vision and makes us sympathetic with problems of the world. We want to bring the fullness of Christ and the Gospel to bear upon the total life of man through the work of the church and God's people everywhere. This desire to be in the world in order to redeem and reform as much of the world as possible leads us, however, to reject the goal of a separated society corresponding to the purity of the Kingdom of God. But there is always the danger that the church will lose sight of its true goals and become adulterated by the world if it mingles too intimately with the world. It has often been pointed out by the sociologists that if the sect goes out into the world it loses its uniqueness. On the other hand, if it withdraws it loses its witness and eventually deteriorates. This dilemma was put well by E. K. Francis in connection with his description of the communities of the Russian Mennonites:

"The Russian period of Mennonite history thus brings clearly to the fore the dilemma and utopian character of a sect. It must either suffer pagans and sinners to run the world, thereby preserving the purity of its ideals, without putting them to the test, or it must, like Dostoyevski's Grand Inquisitor accommodate itself to the stark realities of life in this world, thereby losing its original character."

The writer does not know the answer to this dilemma which faces each sect. For the church to be in the world is indeed a dangerous thing. But certainly this is where the church belongs and there are resources in the Gospel which would give us confidence in place of fear and timidity.

FOOTNOTES

¹Harold S. Bender, "A Historical Review of the Anabaptist-Mennonite Position and Practice from 1525 to Present." Unpublished, Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen, Indiana.

²Harold S. Bender, "The Mennonite Conception of the Church and Its Relation to Present Day Needs," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XIX (April 1945) p. 99.

³*Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁴J. Winfield Fretz, "Community," *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, eds. Harold S. Bender and C. Henry Smith, I (Scottsdale, Pa.: 1955), p. 656.

⁵Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches*, trans. by Olive Wyon, 3rd ed., (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1931) p. 86.

⁶Paul Erb, "The Religious Basis of the Mennonite Community," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XIX (April 1945) pp. 79-85.

POLICIES AND PROBLEMS OF INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS OF MENNONITES ON THE MISSION FIELD

By J. D. Graber

This subject could be interpreted as having to do with problems of cultural interactions of various groups of Mennonites engaged in missionary work in foreign countries. We as a Mennonite family do have a variety of geographical and national backgrounds and there is a considerable variety in the so-called "phenomenal field" or "frame of reference" which defines the norms by which all other "strange," i.e., different behavior is judged. Once this pattern is formed the person will defend it, and tend to resist any attempt to change it. As Minnich has said, "This takes the form of defending the behavior as 'reasonable', 'lawful', or 'right'." We need to understand the social dynamics in such a situation in order to adjust to one another and to resolve the tensions that arise when groups of Mennonites with differing "frames of reference" get into close contact with each other.

This "clash of culture" of course occurs most frequently in our own country and has not been much of a problem at all on foreign mission fields. This may be due to several reasons: (1) Our different groups have not lived and worked very closely together geographically. Our contacts were casual and in the permissive atmosphere of a social visit rather than in a more difficult situation of having to adjust to one another in our work; (2) Mennonite missionaries happily adjusted to a strange culture have then a built-in ability to adapt to new and strange situations and so are willing to adapt to and understand each other; and (3) groups unable or unwilling to adjust to other Mennonite groups will not become foreign missionaries. They will try to preserve their "values" in isolation.

But this is not the problem posed by our subject. It is rather that of Mennonite missionaries in intercultural reaction with new and strange cultures which they are trying to Christianize. (We convert individuals but we Christianize cultures.) It is in these interactions that genuine problems occur and where definite policies sometimes need to be established.

Definition of Terms

Before we enter into our problem directly let us define a few terms. What do we mean by a culture? There is no simpler def-

inition than to say, "It is the man made part of the environment." Here are a few illustrations: a river is not a culture but a canal is. A piece of quartz is not but an arrowhead is. A moan is natural—a word is cultural. Instinct is not culture but education is. That is why we never speak of birds and animals as having a culture. They have only instincts.

The weaver bird weaves an intricate nest but he does not need to learn it. An ornithologist hatched an egg of the weaver bird in an incubator and raised the fledgling in a cage in the laboratory. It never got to see or hear any of its own kind. Yet when this bird reached maturity and the mating and nest building season came along it became very restless in its cage. The ornithologist, sensing that the time was right, introduced string and other nest building material into the cage and the bird immediately began tying the intricate knot that goes into building the sack-like nest. He did not need to learn this skill; he did it by instinct.

But people are much more highly organized individuals and depend on education much more than on instinct in coping with their environment and in setting up their patterns of behavior. Education is the process of passing along to the new generation the culture of the group, i.e., of the tribe, the nation, the society, etc. We must remember that everything we have learned must be passed along or else it is lost. Instincts are not lost but learned skills, views, attitudes, norms, values, etc., can be lost. A very good way to understand any culture is to observe carefully how the young people are taught to become useful members of the society, i.e., study the educational process. Here we see what the norms, values, etc., are which the society considers important and which it thus seeks to perpetuate.

The Gospel and Culture

In trying to understand how the ferment of the gospel of Christ works among a people we need to recognize this difference between human nature and human instinct on the one hand and the customs and culture of a people on the other. The former are universal and we do not exaggerate when we say they are uniform throughout the human family and throughout history. But, again on the other hand, the customs and culture, the man made part of the environment, those entities a people tries to pass along and perpetuate through its educational processes—these are diverse and various.

For example sin is the same today as it was in the time of Adam and Eve. But the forms and manners in which the same sin expresses itself varies from age to age and from people to people. Pride is one of these universal and timeless human problems. It may express itself in the possession of a number of wives (in cer-

tain cultures); in the owning of fancy horses; in possessing large herds of cattle; in driving an expensive car, or, in the case of some of the oil rich sheiks of the Middle East, in owning whole fleets of Cadillacs. Another proud and wealthy potentate may load his wife or wives down with jewelery; in some cultures they wear nose and toe rings while in some they wear rings on the fingers; in some cultures they paint lines across their foreheads and in others they paint the lips. These illustrations make clear that the fundamental human trait remains the same but its expression in different cultures is various.

Absolutes and Relatives

In the same way the Gospel is universal and uniform. Jesus Christ is the "same yesterday, today and forever." We deal, not with a changing gospel, but with "the faith once delivered." In the light of these facts, then, can we say that the same Gospel finds different and various expressions in different times and places? It is a recognition of not merely the possibility but the inevitability of this fact that will help us to understand the true relation of Christ and Culture.

The Gospel, furthermore, cannot be had in a vacuum. It cannot be thought of apart from *some* cultural expression. The Gospel is practical. It speaks to men where they are, and redemptive, suffering love, which we believe is at the heart of the Gospel, finds its significant expression in diverse cultures in diverse ways. This is just another way of saying that the Gospel always becomes involved in the culture of a people. The greatest pitfall then to be avoided is our ever-present propensity to identify the gospel with our culture or with any particular culture.

Christianity not a Western Religion

No one has sinned more in this respect than we of the West. How completely we have identified the Gospel with Western culture! The good life which the Gospel brings has been *constantly* confused and identified with our Western democratic way of life. In speaking of this tendency Richard Niebuhr in his book *Christ and Culture*, page 38 says:

Some theologians, like some anthropologists, do, indeed, think of Christian faith as integrally related to Western culture, whether this term be used to designate one continuous historical society beginning not later than the first century A.D., or a series of distinct and affiliated civilizations as in Toynbee's scheme. So Ernest Troeltsch believes that Christianity and Western culture are so inextricably intertwined that a Christian can say little about his faith to members of other civilizations, and the latter cannot encounter Christ save as a member of the Western world.

Of course Niebuhr goes on to criticize this point of view. Christ can never be imprisoned in any particular culture. He always remains the timeless and the universal with a pertinent message to all men in every age. And this encounter will always find a practical and significant expression in every culture where it is at work. The Gospel cannot exist in a vacuum. We try to shear off its Western cultural accretions and sometimes forget that always there must be some kind of cultural structure. If not this one then another one, and that the problem of seeing Christ as Lord of any and of every culture, constantly changing it into new and currently significant forms, will always be with us.

There is one more principle I need to enunciate before we are ready to take up specific problems of Mennonite intercultural relations in foreign mission situations. This is the humbling and somewhat disturbing fact that the nature of the Church is usually seen more clearly in mission situations among people recently converted to Christianity than in our own Western churches. We may not be aware of the fact that our Christian practices here are so saturated and overlaid with our materialistic and scientific atmosphere that simple and genuine New Testament Christianity has difficulty in showing through. This is a hard saying but before we assume that we have a highly perfected form of Christianity that people of other cultures could well copy we should learn humility. We may have a lot to teach new Christians and young churches in the Orient but they have more to teach us than we like to admit. Dr. Hromadka, at the Evanston Assembly of the National Council of Churches in 1954 said the Church in Communist countries is aware of the godless nature of its government and the cultural patterns it perpetrates, but, he said, the trouble with the Church in the West is that it assumes its government and culture are Christian when in fact materialism is also a godless philosophy. The Church in the West is not free; she is much more the prisoner of her materialism than she realizes *and it is in this illusion that her great danger lies*.

So as Mennonite missionaries we go to other peoples with the humility of the Master. We go in the spirit of penitence because of our own weaknesses and failures. We believe literally that we can best know the love of Christ—its length, breadth and depth—not by ourselves or among ourselves alone, but as Paul says, we *know with all saints*. We go to learn as well as to teach.

Mennonite Missions and Foreign Cultures

With this theoretical background let us now consider some specifics in our foreign mission situations. Some of these specifics will be superficial and trivial while others will be more fundamental. Let us take as our first illustration our missions experi-

ence with the Toba Indians of northern Argentina. We opened mission work among these people in 1940. They were then a semi-nomadic tribe with a most uncertain economic base. Our missionaries thought they could be much better Christians if they lived as settled agriculturalists rather than as semi-nomads going annually through periods of destitution and real need. So a farm was purchased, divided into small tracts, and converted families were urged to settle permanently on this plot. Money was loaned for building a "decent" house, instead of the brush and grass huts they commonly lived in, and other loans were given for buying a team of oxen and farm equipment. A community store was established where goods were sold at a small profit and where credit was extended to those unable to pay cash. Their cotton was consolidated into a large unit and transported and sold to better advantage than would have been possible for any individual farmer. The proceeds of the cotton sale, furthermore, were banked by the missionary and doled out as needed. This was to prevent the usual custom of spending the entire income in one grand and lavish feast with nothing saved against the proverbial "rainy day."

Now this system seems so good and so right to us. In fact we have a tendency to think of these values as really part and parcel of the gospel itself. But we closed out the store and sold the farm. We no longer believe this was a desirable approach. The Indians did not take to the system, in fact found it incompatible with many of their traditional tribal values. This Western capitalistic type of living was actually teaching them to be materialistic and selfish. They were accustomed to sharing with the rest of the tribe anything they had. As long as any one member of the tribe has food or money they can all eat. But now they were to build up an equity. They were to save and be frugal. But this their relatives and friends could not understand and so tensions arose—estrangement occurred and in some cases they developed signs of manic depression. So, as I said, we have abandoned this whole approach. We have admitted that people can be good Christians without being thrifty.

In dealing with peoples of a different culture we must recognize that our values may not be their values, and that making them as much as possible like ourselves is not necessarily good. It may even be bad. But this is an old Western trait. Jesuit missionaries in the 17th century were already making this same assumption. Father Dobritzhofer in writing of his experiences among Indians in the Paraguayan Chaco describes their method and their objectives. They tried to gather the nomadic Indians into towns and teach them to make a living by agriculture. To put it bluntly, they tried to make the nomadic Indians over into sedentary European farmers. The process failed, as it always will

when missionaries assume that their own culture is superior to that of the people to whom they go, and when they try to make them over into replicas of themselves.

How, then, *does* one do missionary work among people like this? This question cannot be easily or quickly answered. Only the principle can be stated and that is that the Gospel must find its way into the hearts of a people like this and then it must find ways of expressing itself within the culture. All change has to be wrought by a process of growth from the inside outward and cannot be imposed from without. They can become true and committed Christians but they may not be good farmers and they may have no social security, insurance or bank accounts.

I think we all know the old story of the thrifty North American of European background (he could easily have been a Menonite missionary) who found a young Indian man sitting in the shade of a tree on a summer day. "Why don't you go out into the field to work?" the European American asked.

"What for?" asked the Indian.

"To earn some money."

"What for?"

"To buy some land."

"What for?"

"To raise some corn."

And so on the conversation goes through the idea of building up a bank account, and owning cattle and real estate so that finally, as the European American expressed it, "When you are old you will be able to retire."

The Indian yawned as he retorted from his comfortable position under the tree, "But I'm retired already."

They may continue to believe that illness is caused by a tormenting evil spirit that has to be gotten out through prayer and in an atmosphere of singing and shouting. We are shocked at this from the high pinnacle of our scientific achievements, but really there is not much in the New Testament that would change their concepts of the etiology of disease. They will express suffering love in ways very much different from our accepted Western ways, and who are we to say that our ways are more truly Christian than theirs? This is what we mean when we talk about the problem of inter-cultural relations on foreign mission fields.

Of course we should bring them as much of the benefits of Western scientific medicine as we can. They would have less physical hardship if they followed better farming methods and would spend their limited income more frugally. But these so-called advantages have to be introduced slowly and in such a way that they will become naturalized within the existing culture and more or

less unconsciously become a part of it. Introducing cultural change is a delicate process and a missionary needs much patience and understanding if it is to be done profitably.

Identification and Communications

Herbert Minnich has written in his thesis on the general subject of a missionary as an agent of cultural change that, "The two great problems of the modern missionary are identification and communication." He then goes on to demonstrate that where identification does not occur communication can also not occur. This viewpoint is crucial for the missionary. He has to learn to respect the new culture to which he has come and to love its people. If they do not accept him they can never accept the Christ he represents. If he does not love them with "redemptive love" they can never, never understand the suffering and redeeming love of the Saviour. The missionary often asks, "Can I not preach Christ and Him crucified to these strange people without becoming so deeply involved in their manners and ways?" The answer is an unqualified *No*.

One illustration must suffice here. Our missionary among the Toba Indians had to decide whether to drink *mate* with his Indian brethren. The same "straw" and cup are passed from mouth to mouth around the circle. Some may have TB, and mouth infections are not uncommon among them. He finally decided he would participate fully in this fundamental social practice. "If I do not drink *mate* with them I might be their *friend*," he said, "but if I drink *mate* with them I am their *brother*." It is this kind of identification that makes communication possible.

Some Cultural Expressions

And now a few more superficial problems, but because of emotional involvement may be difficult problems. I speak here exclusively out of my own experience and the illustrations are limited to our own Church group. This study could be enriched by some research in a number of other Mennonite foreign mission fields. When our first missionaries went to India they had to decide whether women were allowed to wear colored glass bracelets. Was not this jewelry and vain display and was not this forbidden by scripture? But only widows wore no glass bracelets. These glass bangles on the wrist were the mark of the married woman whose husband was living. So our missionaries, wisely I feel, permitted the wearing of colored glass bracelets.

What about the wearing of a mustache? Our Church has traditionally opposed it. There may be an historical reason for this point of view in the fact that Napoleon's soldiers wore mustaches and no other man was allowed to wear one. Thus it became a

symbol of war and of pride. Against both of these our forefathers rebelled and so the non-wearing of a mustache became next to an absolute in our Church.

But in India every man wears a mustache. The only time he shaves it off is when there is a death in the family, i.e., when he is in mourning. Others might shave clean when they were trying to climb the social ladder and be like the European. So again our missionaries wisely permitted the wearing of hair on the upper lip by the brethren in the Indian Church. One missionary correctly remarked that whereas growing a "cookie duster" may be a mark of pride in our Western culture, clean shaving may be its expression in the Indian culture.

Is the manner of greeting among brethren a scriptural absolute? Whereas the King James Version says "greet one another with a holy kiss," Phillips translates the sentence, "have a hearty handshake all around." It is clear that Phillips considers the mode of greeting a cultural trait and not a Biblical absolute! It is a real question whether our Western way of kissing is what Paul visualized when he wrote this injunction. Probably not. In India the traditional greeting is the joining of the hands before the face as the head is bowed. In Latin America it is the *abrazo* (the embrace), probably introduced into Spain by the Moslems of Arabia, and thence to Latin America. In Japan greeting is by deep and repeated bowing. In some cultures they rub noses and in France a close friend gets a hearty kiss on both cheeks. The wise missionary will preserve and teach the principle of brotherly love and concern and will let the people express this in their own way even though this is not "the way we are used to at home."

What about forms of worship and decorum in a church service? When we see a worship service conducted in a foreign culture and in a foreign language that is, as a tourist from home visiting the mission would describe it, "just like we do it at home" this should be a cause of concern rather than of satisfaction. This sort of unimaginative slaving of forms and customs current in a Western church most likely serves to denationalize the Church and make of the Gospel a *foreign* thing. The Gospel is native in every culture. As to form and method in worship, we recall the scriptural injunction to do everything "*decently and in order.*" This does not mean that a service has to be quiet and formal. *Reality* is the soul of worship and some express this reality noisily, even with the use of drums, while others find reality in silent meditation. A much more imaginative approach to the whole problem of the mode of worship on foreign mission fields needs to be taken for much too frequently we have simply introduced our own Western customs.

The question of a covering for women in worship has also introduced problems and demonstrated the wisdom of adaptation. In India women traditionally cover their heads by bringing the loose end of the *sari* over their heads. This was accepted by missionaries as a suitable form of a devotional covering even though they had never seen anything like it in Europe or America. In Latin America the black veil used by the Catholic Church was adopted. Some evangelicals feel that just because the Catholics wear it evangelicals should *not* wear it. This is, of course, specious argument. Just because a Catholic loves his wife is no reason why a Protestant should beat his wife. It is like saying that because Communists promote peace we as Christians have to promote war to prove that we're not Communists. In East Africa a type of head wrap, a white cloth wrapped around the head, is accepted as a suitable form of traditional covering. In Japan, where women never wear anything on their heads at all and where a head covering has never been a symbol of woman's subjection to man the problem is difficult and its solution is still being studied by our missionary group.

Nonresistance and Polygamy

More fundamental than external or cultural expressions of the Gospel are some deeper theological and practical questions, such as nonresistance and polygamy for example. Nonresistance is not actually a problem of cultural interplay. We consider it almost a Biblical absolute, and deeply understood it is that. What I mean is that suffering love that redeems is the heart of the Gospel, and therefore an attitude of suffering love makes our own lives redemptive, i.e., they become thus the channel of Christ's redemptive love to men.

So, while we do not in the least call into question the *doctrine* of nonresistance the mode of its practice is a legitimate subject for discussion. In many circles in America we take the absolute position forbidding any kind of military service at all. Should our mission churches in other lands therefore also take this same absolute position? Are they true to the nonresistant faith if they do not?

Mennonite missionaries, of our own branch of the Mennonite Church, had a meeting in France a few years ago to discuss this very question. Andre von der Mensbrugge, who was shortly to go to prison for his absolute stand on the question was most firm in his insistence that the absolute position should not be set up as a test of membership. He was clear that the doctrine should be taught and emphasized, but felt the actual manner of its expression, whether by absolute refusal or the joining of the "sanitary corps" (called "medical service" in the U. S. Army), chap-

laincy or a similar service, should be left to individual conscience. Our meeting fundamentally agreed with this point of view, but modified it a bit by saying that the emerging *Church* in Belgium or France should sincerely seek for itself, in its present situation, the most significant and practical mode of expression of the doctrine. On this level the problem becomes one of inter-cultural relations as between the churches in America and Europe.

The question of polygamy is not primarily a Mennonite problem. It faces all churches coming into being within a culture that not only tolerates but even encourages polygamy. It is clear that the Bible upholds the ideal of monogamy. This is God's purpose for man and woman from the time of creation. But still there is much polygamy in the Bible. It is never admitted to be ideal, however. More than one wife always causes trouble. Time does not permit of citing illustrations. This doctrine is reiterated in the New Testament. Yet it appears that some polygamy was allowed in the emerging Church. Else what would the requirements for a Bishop and a Deacon mean when the Apostle says "he is to be the husband of one wife."

Most likely, however, those still involved in the social entanglements of polygamy were not full-fledged members but had sort of an associate relationship. In many African churches they may be attached to the Church in a varying type of relationship as "believers," but are not eligible for important church office, such as minister, deacon or member of the Church Council, until proper provision has been made for all the wives and a scriptural monogamous home has been established.

Cultural Relativism

The attitude of the foreign missionary in his inter-cultural relations must be that of cultural relativism. This means that he must realize that the same Gospel principles express themselves differently in different cultures. The Christian missionary does not carry this principle as far as would the non-Christian anthropologist, for the Gospel and the revelation of God in Christ are absolutes. To distinguish between absolutes and relatives in a cultural situation and find useful and significant expressions for a Gospel absolute in a strange culture—this is a difficult task, but one the foreign missionary cannot side-step if he is to build the Church truly and soundly. It is no exaggeration to say that, other things being equal, a good missionary will also be a good anthropologist.

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